Agape Empowerment

Enterer of the Threshold 0=0

Initiate Documents

(Version 1.1)

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The Agape Empowerment

Enterer of the Threshold 0=0 Grade

(Version 2.7)

Temple Layout:

Within a Freemasonic initiation hall, or any compatible foursquare ritual space, four thrones are distributed about the compass quarters, with the Stele of Revealing elevated above and behind the throne in the east. At the temple's center are two pillars set about a fathom apart. The northern pillar is black, the southern white, and votive candles burn upon their capitals. Situated midway between the line of the pillars and the throne of the west is a black double cubical altar. Upon the altar are, a red rose in the east, incense to the south, a chalice of water in the west, a paten of cakes of light[1] to the north, and the text of *Liber AL vel Legis* in the center. The Banner of the East is displayed to the immediate south of the throne in the east, while the Banner of the West is similarly placed to the north of the throne in the west. All officers wear white robes in addition to their distinctive regalia.

The Hierophant presides from the throne of the east. They wear a flame red cloak and a uraeus crown. Their circular lamen depends from a purple ribbon and depicts the eye of Horus set within an equilateral triangle. The lamen's background is black, while the triangle and eye are red. The Hierophant bears the royal *was* scepter with the head and double pronged tail of Set, its shaft banded with the seven planetary colors.

The station of the Magus is upon the throne of the south. Their cape is a solar yellow or gold, and their lamen is hung from a gold ribbon. It depicts the winged disk of Hadit, as illustrated on the Stele of Revealing. Hadit's central disk is rendered in gold, the serpents are blue, and the wings are colored "purple & green."[2] The Magus wields the wand of double power, decorated with the elemental colors.[3]

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[1] *AL* III: 23-29 gives the recipe for the cakes of light and describes their ritual use.
[2] *AL* II: 50
[3] As depicted upon atu I of the Rider Waite tarot. See also *AL* III: 72.

In the north is the station of the Sibyl, attired in an azure blue cape and a lamen hung from a silver ribbon bearing the design of "The Five Pointed Star, with a Circle in the Middle, & the circle is Red."[4] Its background is blue, and the star and circle are red. The Sibyl bears the lotus wand, striped in zodiacal colors.

Enthroned in the west is the Warden, wearing a black hooded cloak. Their lamen depends from an orange ribbon and illustrates the mercurial caduceus in orange against a green background. The Warden bears the hermit's lamp and staff as depicted in atu IX of the tarot.

If necessary, a blackguard can be posted by the door to serve as an usher.

There are no restrictions on attendance, or protocols regarding secrecy associated with the performance of the Agape Empowerment. Members of the audience sit along the north, west and south perimeter of the temple, and wear white robes if they have previously received initiation in the empowerment. All participants may be addressed as "sister" or "brother," followed by their name, based on their preferred gender designation, or as "comrade" irrespective of gender. When officers of the ritual are addressed by their titles the prefix "honored" is used. The hierophant is called "very honored." The honorifics apply to the roles of the offices, not the individuals holding office. Persons undergoing initiation are "candidates" until they are brought through the pillars, whereupon they become "initiates."

After the mystic circumambulation during the opening of the temple, but before its reversal in the closing, all movement in the ritual chamber is clockwise, with the direction of the visible movement of the sun through the celestial sphere. The sign of the enterer, but not the sign of silence, is given upon passing the Stele of Revealing in the east, while both signs are given towards the east while entering and leaving the room for any reason during the course of the ritual.

Theurgic God-Forms of the Officers:

Hierophant: Ra-Hoor-Khuit, visualized as depicted upon the Stele of Revealing.

[4] *AL* I: 60

Sibyl: Nuit, visualized as an iridescent blue expanse of night sky surrounding the physical body of the officer.

Magus: Hadit, visualized as a point of golden yellow light at the heart. Wings are also visualized as emerging from the back of the officer.

Warden: Aiwass, visualized as a veiled figure, robed in white, swathed in luminous billows of astral vapors.

Abbreviations: Hierophant (H), Sibyl (S), Magus (M), Warden (W), Candidate (C), Initiate (I).

***Opening*:**

All are seated. Hierophant knocks once with their scepter.

(H): Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law[5]

(All): Love is the law, love under will[6]

(H): Fellow stars of the company of heaven, we have assembled here today in solidarity with the Great Work of Thelema, namely the gnosis and actualization of our True Wills. Therefore, in fellowship of will, and through the rites of magick, please assist me to open this temple of love under will.

(All): So mote it be!

[5] *AL* I: 40
[6] *AL* I: 57

(H): Honored Warden, what is the first duty of the magician prior to undertaking any theurgic operation?

(W): Very Honored Hierophant, to see that the temple is properly tyled.

(H): On behalf of the company of heaven I charge you with the performance of this task.

The Warden goes to the portal of the temple.

(W): (*elevates lamp and staff towards the east*) Hekas! Hekas! Estai Bebeloi!

(or) Procul, o Procul, Estai Profani!

In the name of the Bornless One, by the power of the hermetic staff and with the guidance of the hidden light, I declare that the shells have been adjured and banished unto their habitations!

The Warden returns to their seat in the temple and remains standing.

(H): Fellow stars of the company of heaven, let us kindle together the hidden light of the gnosis, which "shines in the darkness, but the darkness overcomes it not"[7] by giving the sign of projected light towards the altar, followed by the sign of silence.

[7] John 1: 5.

All rise with Hierophant and give signs.

(H): The speech in the silence.[8]

(M): The words against the sons of night.

(W): The voice of Thoth in the universe in the presence of the eternal.

(S): The formulas of knowledge.

(H): The wisdom of breath.

(M): The radix of vibration.

(W): The shaking of the invisible.

(S): The rolling asunder of the darkness.

(H): The becoming visible of matter.

[8] Slightly adapted from the general and particular exordiums found in the G.D. document Z.1 "The Enterer of the Threshold" and *Liber Israfel sub figura LXIV*, verse 18.

(M): The piercing of the coils of the stooping dragon.

Hierophant steps forward and stamps their scepter at the midpoint between the pillars.

(W): The breaking forth of the light.

(S): All these are in the knowledge of Thoth.

(H): At the ending of the night, at the limits of the light, Thoth stood before the unborn ones of time.

(M): Then was formulated the universe.

(W): Then came forth the gods thereof.

(S): The aeons of the bornless beyond.

(H): Then was the voice vibrated.

(M): Then was the name declared.

(W): At the threshold of the entrance.

(S): Between the universe and the infinite.

(H): In the sign of the enterer, stood Thoth.

(M): As before him were the aeons proclaimed.

(W): In breath did he vibrate them.

(S): In symbols did he record them.

(H): For between the light and the darkness did he stand.

All are seated with the Hierophant.

(H): Honored Warden, how many officers preside over the rites of this temple?

(W): Very Honored Hierophant, there are four principal officers, namely the Hierophant, the Magus, the Sibyl and the Warden.

(H): Let the nature of their offices be proclaimed once again, that the powers whose astral and material images they are may be reawakened in the spheres of sensation of those present and

in the sphere of this temple, for by names and images are all powers awakened and reawakened.

Honored Warden, your station and duties?

(W): (*stands*) My station is on the throne of the west in the quarter of the setting sun, representing increase of darkness and decrease of light. I guard the gate of the west, bearing the hermetic light enlightening the realm of the shells. I oversee the tyling of the temple, superintend the reception of the candidate for initiation, and proclaim all announcements and reports. I represent the presence of the Shekinah in the world of action, and I am the Hermit of the tarot, corresponding to the Hebrew letter Yod. My lamp is a symbol of the gnostic wisdom, and my staff signifies its directing power.

(H): Honored Sibyl, your station and duties?

(S): (*stands*) My station is in the north, which is the quarter of the sun at midnight, where the company of heaven is unveiled, disclosing the celestial sphere of the body of Nuit. I bear the cup of lustral waters, with which I purify the temple and the candidate. I represent the sephirah Binah and the pillar of form upon the Tree of Life. I am the High Priestess of the tarot, corresponding to the letter Gimel. I carry the lotus wand, symbolizing the enlightenment of the understanding.

(H): Honored Magus, your station and duties?

(M): (*stands*) My station is in the south, the quarter of the sun at highest elevation, symbolized by the winged solar disk of Hadit. I bear the burning incense of aspiration, with which I

consecrate the temple and the candidate. I represent the sephirah Chokmah and the pillar of force upon the Tree of Life. I am the Magician of the tarot, corresponding to the letter Beth. I wield the wand of double power, directing the energies of magick.

(H): (*stands*) The station of the Hierophant is on the throne of the east, before the golden dawn of light, life, love and liberty. "Ra-Hoor-Khuit hath taken his seat in the East at the Equinox of the Gods; and let Asar be with Isa, who also are one. But they are not of me. Let Asar be the adorant, Isa the sufferer; Hoor in his secret name and splendour is the Lord initiating."[9] I proclaim that "The word of the Law is Θελημα"[10] and that "There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt."[11] I supervise the rituals of the temple on behalf of the congregation of the company of heaven. I represent the middle pillar of the Tree of Life, particularly as expressed by the sephirah Tiphareth. I am the Hierophant of the tarot, corresponding to the letter Vau, and my ensign of office is the royal *was* scepter of the pharaonic priesthood. (*All sit with the Hierophant*.)

Honored Magus, what further mystery lies concealed in the symbolism of the Hebrew letters associated with the officers of this temple?

(M): Very Honored Hierophant, via gematria the letters Vau, Gimel, Beth and Yod add to the number 21.

(H): Honored Sybil, of what qabalistic significance is the number 21?

[9] *AL* I: 49
[10] *AL* I: 39
[11] *AL* III: 60

(S): Very Honored Hierophant, it is the value of Ehyieh, the god name of the primordial sephirah Kether at the apex of the Tree of Life. 21 is also the mystic number of the sixth sephirah Tiphareth, generated by the sum of the first six integers.

(H): Honored Warden, what is the importance of the correspondence of Kether and Tiphareth to the symbolism of the number 21?

(W): Very Honored Hierophant, in Tiphareth is represented the lord of the universe and space, the sun, while Kether stands for the hidden light of the gnosis of which the visible solar light is but a cipher.

(H): Honored Sibyl, I charge you to purify the temple with water.

Leaving their scepter, the Sibyl goes directly to the altar. They take up the chalice and go to the west of the temple.

(S): (*sprinkles water facing west*) "For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect."[12]

The Sibyl passes in a straight line to the south-east and north-east, purifying in the same manner, returning to the west to complete the triangle. They then replace the chalice on the altar, return to their throne and are seated.

[12] *AL* I: 44

(H): Honored Magus, I charge you to consecrate the temple with fire.

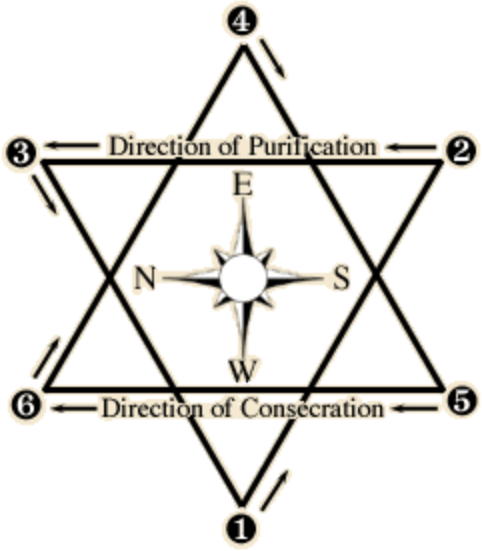
Leaving their wand, the Magus goes directly to the altar. Lighting the incense, they pass through the pillars and go to the east of the temple.

(M): (*elevating incense*) "I am uplifted in thine heart, and the kisses of the stars rain hard upon thy body."[13]

The Magus passes in a straight line to the south-west and the north-west, consecrating in the same manner, returning to the east to complete the triangle. They then return to the altar, passing through the pillars, replace the incense on the altar, and return to their throne where they are seated.

The pattern of purification and consecration is illustrated below:

[13] *AL* II: 62



(H): Honored Warden, I charge you to invest the quarters with their words and images through the performance of the lesser banishing/invoking ritual of the pentagram, for by words and images are the powers of magick invoked and banished.

Done. Either the banishing or invoking version may be used at the preference of the Hierophant, after which the Warden returns to their station and is seated.

(H): Weave a circle round him thrice.

(M): and close your eyes with holy dread.

(W): For he on honey-dew hath fed.

(S): And drunk the milk of Paradise.[14]

(H): Let the mystic circumambulation take place along the orbit of the light.

All present rise. The officers form a line in the northeast in the order Hierophant, Magus, Sybil and Warden. The procession circles the temple deosil or clockwise with its circumference just inside the four thrones, passing the east three times in the sign of the enterer, but not the sign of silence. Each officer falls out in turn upon reaching their station and remains standing, the Hierophant returning last at the end of their fourth circuit.

(H): The mystic circumambulation symbolizing the golden dawn of the light is accomplished. Let us adore the visible lord of the universe and space, the sun, and that invisible lord "in ourselves whose name is Mystery of Mystery"[15] which it symbolizes.

All face east.

(All): Holy art thou, lord of the universe! (*sign of light*)

Holy art thou, whom nature hath not formed! (*sign of light*)

Holy art thou, the vast and the mighty one! (*sign of light*)

Lord of the light and of the darkness! (*sign of silence*)

All are seated.

[14] S.T. Coleridge, *Kubla Khan*.
[15] *Liber XV*, "Of the Ceremony of the opening of the Veil."

(H): Honored Warden, on behalf of the company of heaven and in the name of the lord of the universe, I charge you to declare that this temple has been duly opened for the performance of the great work in and through the symbols of the magick of light.

The Warden goes to the northeast with the current, faces west and elevates their lamp and staff.

(W): In the name of the lord of the universe and of the hidden god concealed within the adytum of the self, I declare that the sun has arisen and the shadows flee away.

The Warden returns to their station with the current and is seated.

(H): Honored Sybil and Magus, let us analyze the formula of the Magick of light.

The Hierophant rises with Sybil and Magus.

(H): (*extends arms in sign of Osiris slain*) Khabs.

(S): (*extends arms*) Am.

(M): (*extends arms*) Pekht.

(S): (*crosses arms in sign of Osiris risen*) Konx.

(M): (*crosses arms*) Om.

(H): (*crosses arms*) Pax.

(M): (*sign of projected light towards the altar*) Light.

(H): (*projected light towards altar*) In.

(S): (*projected light towards altar*) Extension.

The Hierophant is seated, followed by the officers.

The Hierophant gives one knock.

Initiation:

Prior to the opening of the temple, the candidate for initiation, having signed the Statement of Intent and communicated their choice of a magical motto, has been sequestered in the chamber of reflection, lit by a single candle set beside a human skull.

(H): Mother of Mystery, what is the place?

(S): The pronaos of the temple of initiation.

(H): Father of Chaos, what is the hour?

(M): The hour of the golden dawn.

(H): We are gathered here today to initiate [name] in the mysteries of Thelema to empower them in the discernment and practice of their True Will. They shall now lose their mundane name and henceforth will be known among us as [motto]. Honored Warden, prepare the candidate for the ceremony of their initiation and superintend their admission.

Leaving their wand at their station but taking their lamp, the Warden departs the Temple, preparing the candidate within the Chamber of Reflection by blindfolding them. Taking them by the arm they guide them to the Temple, give the knock 3-5-3 and enter, stopping when within the room.

(W): Inheritor of a Dying World, arise and enter the Path of Darkness.

(H): There are four gates to one palace; the floor of that palace is of silver and gold; lapis lazuli & jasper are there; and all rare scents; jasmine & rose, and the emblems of death. Let him enter in turn or at once the four gates; let him stand on the floor of the palace. Will he not sink? Amn. Ho! warrior, if thy servant sink? But there are means and means.[16]

(S): The Mother of Darkness hath blinded her/him with her hair.

(H): Because of my hair the trees of Eternity.[17]

(M): The Father of Darkness hath hidden her/him under his wings.

(H): the red gleam is in my eyes; & my spangles are purple & green.[18]

(W): Her/His limbs are still weary from the wars which were in heaven.

(H): though with fire and sword it be burnt down & shattered, yet an invisible house there standeth.[19]

(W): Unconsecrated and unpurified, thou canst not enter the sacred temple.

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[16] *AL* I:51
[17] *AL* I:59
[18] *AL* II:50
[19] *AL* III:34

(H): Let the candidate be purified and consecrated.

Sybil takes the chalice of water from the altar and stands before candidate. They purify them as the Priest in the Gnostic Mass with the words:

(S): Be thou pure of body and soul.

Sybil returns to their station with the chalice.

Magus takes the burning incense from the altar and stands before candidate. They consecrate them as the Priest in the Gnostic Mass with the words:

(M): Be thou fervent of body and soul.

Magus resumes their seat, taking the incense with them.

(H): Bring the candidate before the Pylons of the Temple of Initiation, at the threshold of illumination.

Warden leads the candidate to the center, facing the Hierophant directly between the pillars.

(H): [motto], we stand ready to initiate you into the mysteries of Thelema. To this end, we have received your signed Statement of Intent regarding your willingness to cooperate with the moral standards of our company. These prescriptions, which are intended solely to free the operation of your True Will among us, constitute what in yoga is known as yama, which are the negative ethical restraints undertaken to facilitate spiritual practice. The successive yogic cultivation of niyama, or positive virtuous action, is equivalent to the practical manifestation of the divine and personal True Will. This ritual of initiation is intended to assist you in the discrimination, or gnosis, of this Will. However, though we may summon the hosts of heaven, and subdue the hordes of hell in your aid, recognize that it is you and you alone that bears ultimate responsibility for the autonomous course of your star through the vault of the company of heaven. Therefore, I ask you simply yet earnestly: is it your Will to proceed with this ceremony of initiation?

Candidate answers in the affirmative of their own free will.

Hierophant gives one rap with gavel.

(H): Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.[20]

(M): There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.[21]

(S): The word of Sin is restriction.[22]

[20] *AL* I:40
[21] *AL* III:60
[22] *AL* I:41

(H): Let the candidate be conducted in the mystical circumambulation along the path of gnosis that leads to the enlightenment of the True Will.

(M): The secret voice of my divine and deepest self said unto me—let me enter the path of darkness and, peradventure, there may I find the light of my own truth. I am the only being in an abyss of darkness; from an abyss of darkness came I forth ere my birth, from the silence of a primal sleep. "I am alone: there is no God where I am."[23]

(S): And the voice of the aeons answered to my self—I am that which formulates in darkness, the light that shines in the darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not.[24] "I am Infinite Space, and the Infinite Stars thereof"[25]—"Come forth, o children, under the stars, & take your fill of love!"[26]

(H): Honored Warden, place the candidate in the northern quarter of the temple, the direction of the sun at midnight, symbolical of the highest degree of darkness, ignorance, and fatality.

Without having them pass through the pillars, the Warden conducts the candidate to the north, facing east. They begin to circumambulate deosil, or clockwise, with the candidate as soon as the Hierophant begins their speech, dipping the lamp while passing the east in lieu of the sign of the enterer.

(H): I am the Heart; and the Snake is entwined

[23] *AL* II:23
[24] Paraphrase of *John* 1:5
[25] *AL* I:22
[26] *AL* I:12

About the invisible core of the mind.

Rise, O my snake! It is now is the hour

Of the hooded and holy ineffable flower.

Rise, O my snake, into brilliance of bloom

On the corpse of Osiris afloat in the tomb!

O heart of my mother, my sister, mine own,

Thou art given to Nile, to the terror Typhon!

Ah me! But the glory of ravening storm

Enswathes thee and wraps thee in frenzy of form.

Be still, O my soul! that the spell may dissolve

As the wands are upraised, and the aeons revolve.

Behold! in my beauty how joyous Thou art,

O snake that caresses the crown of mine heart!

Behold! we are one, and the tempest of years

Goes down to the dusk, and the Beetle appears.

O Beetle! the drone of Thy dolorous note

Be ever the trance of this tremulous throat!

I await the awaking! The summons on high

From the Lord Adonai, from the Lord Adonai![27]

[27] *Liber LXV*, I:1

Upon passing the Hierophant twice, the Warden stops just short of the throne of the south, pausing if necessary until the Hierophant's speech is completed before speaking.

(W): Unpurified and unconsecrated, thou cannot enter the path of the south.

Crossing the temple west of the pillars, the Sybil stands before candidate with the chalice. They purify them as the Priest in the Gnostic Mass with the words:

(S): Be thou pure of body and soul.

Sybil returns to their station with the chalice, crossing laterally just west of the pillars.

With the incense, the Magus rises and stands before candidate. They consecrate them as the Priest in the Gnostic Mass with the words:

(M): Be thou fervent of body and soul.

The Magus resumes their seat.

(W): Man of earth, twice purified and twice consecrated, thou may approach the gateway of the south.

The Warden positions the candidate before the Magus, momentarily raising their hoodwink while the Magus stands challenging them with their wand.

(M): Thou cannot pass by me, says the Guardian of the south, unless thou can tell me my name.

(W): (for candidate) Thou art the "Magician and the Exorcist," "the axle of the wheel, and the cube in the circle."[28] Hadit is thy name, Magus of the solar disk, winging its way through the vault of heaven at the noontime hour.

(M): "Fear not at all; fear neither men nor Fates, nor gods, nor anything. Money fear not, nor laughter of the folk folly, nor any other power in heaven or upon the earth or under the earth. Nu is your refuge as Hadit your light; and I am the strength, force, vigour, of your arms."[29] Thou hast known me, so pass thou on.

The Magus is seated.

Beginning with the Hierophant's recitation, the Warden continues to guide the circumambulation of the candidate, passing the Hierophant once more before stopping short of the throne of the north.

(H): Into my loneliness comes—

The sound of a flute in dim groves that haunt the uttermost hills.

[28] *AL* II:7
[29] *AL* III:17

Even from the brave river they reach to the edge of the wilderness.

And I behold Pan.

The snows are eternal above, above—

And their perfume smokes upward into the nostrils of the stars.

But what have I to do with these?

To me only the distant flute, the abiding vision of Pan.

On all sides Pan to the eye, to the ear;

The perfume of Pan pervading, the taste of him utterly filling my mouth, so that the

tongue breaks forth into a weird and monstrous speech.

The embrace of him intense on every centre of pain and pleasure.

The sixth interior sense aflame with the inmost self of Him,

Myself flung down the precipice of being

Even to the abyss, annihilation.

An end to loneliness, as to all.

Pan! Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan![30]

(W): (*pausing, if necessary, until the speech is concluded*) Unpurified and unconsecrated, thou cannot enter the path of the north.

The Sybil rises, standing before the candidate with the chalice. They purify them as the Priest in the Gnostic Mass with the words:

[30] *Liber VII*, Prologue of the Unborn

(S): Be thou pure of body and soul.

The Sybil is seated.

Crossing the temple west of the pillars the Magus stands before the candidate with the incense. They consecrate them as the Priest in the Gnostic Mass with the words:

(M): Be thou fervent of body and soul.

The Magus returns to their station with the incense, crossing laterally just west of the pillars.

(W): Man of earth, thrice purified and thrice consecrated, thou may approach the gateway of the north.

The Warden positions the candidate before the Sybil, momentarily raising their hoodwink while the Sybil stands challenging them with their wand.

(S): Thou cannot pass by me, says the Guardian of the north, unless thou can tell me my name.

(W): (*for candidate*) Light shining in darkness is thy name, the light of the starry sky, and of the infinity of space. Nuit is thy name, the "continuous one of Heaven," "the consciousness of the continuity of existence."[31]

(S): Adjustment of power is the secret of the True Will. Unadjusted mercy is weakness that would abet oppression. Unadjusted severity is but cruelty and barrenness of action. "For pure will, uassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect."[32] Thou hast known me, so pass thou on to the pylons of initiation.

The Sybil is seated.

Starting with the Hierophant's speech, as before, the Warden again guides the candidate's circumambulation, passing the Hierophant once more before turning inwards from the southern quarter and placing the candidate just short of the gap between the pillars.

(H): Then in the might of the Lion did I formulate unto myself that holy and formless fire,

Qadosh, which darteth and flasheth through the depths of the Universe.

At the touch of the Fire Qadosh the earth melted into a liquor clear as water.

At the touch of the Fire Qadosh the water smoked into a lucid air.

At the touch of the Fire Qadosh the air ignited, and became Fire.

At the touch of the Fire Qadosh, O Lord, the Fire dissipated into Space.

At the touch of the Fire Qadosh, O Lord, the Space resolved itself into a Profundity of

[31] *AL* I:26-7.
[32] *AL* I:44

Mind.

At the touch of the Fire Qadosh the Mind of the Father was broken up into the brilliance of our Lord the Sun.

At the touch of the Fire Qadosh the Brilliance of our Lord was absorbed in the Naught of our Lady of the Body of the Milk of the Stars.

Then only was the Fire Qadosh extinguished, when the Enterer was driven back from the threshold,

And the Lord of Silence was established upon the Lotus flower.

Then was accomplished all that which was to be accomplished.

And All and One and Naught were slain in the slaying of the Warrior 418,

In the slaying of the subtlety that expanded all these things into the Twelve Rays of the Crown,

That returned unto One, and beyond One, even unto the vision of the Fool in his folly that chanted the word Ararita, and beyond the Word and the Fool; yea, beyond the Word and the Fool.[33]

The Warden stands immediately behind the candidate. Bearing their wands as well as the chalice and incense, the Magus and Sybil maneuver with the current to the south and north, respectively, of the altar facing each other. They replace the chalice of water and incense on the altar.

[33] *Liber Ararita*, chapter VII

The Hierophant advances towards the pillars, arms outstretched in the sign of Osiris slain, which is also the sign of Horus winged.

(H): "I fly and I alight as an hawk:

of mother-of-emerald are my mighty sweeping wings.

I swoop down upon the black earth;

and it gladdens into green at my coming.

Children of Earth! rejoice! rejoice exceedingly;

For your salvation is at hand."[34]

(H): (*standing between the pillars, immediately before the candidate*) [Name], you stand now before the portal of the mysteries, the symbolic gateway of initiation. Prepare to enter the immeasurable region. (*brief pause*) Reach your right hand forward, as if seeking guidance in the darkness.

Hierophant takes candidates hand in theirs.

(M): The unveiling of the company of heaven.[35]

(S): Every man and every woman is a star.[36]

[34] *Liber Tzaddi,* verses 1-3
[35] *AL* I:2
[36] *AL* I:3

(H): Come forth, o children, under the stars, & take your fill of love![37]

Warden removes the candidates blindfold. Leading them by the hand, Hierophant steps backwards and guides the candidate through the pillars to stand before the throne of the east. The Warden likewise advances, placing themselves between the throne and the initiate, facing east with elevated lamp.

(H): (*facing east with initiate while raising wand*) Hear us O Bornless One, Lord of the light and of the darkness! Look with favor on this initiate who now stands before the throne of the sun in the east, emblem of the golden dawn of gnosis, and grant thy aid unto the aspirations of their True Will. Make all spirits subject unto them, so that every spirit of the firmament, and of the ether, upon the earth and under the earth, on dry land and in the water, of whirling air and of rushing fire, and every spell and scourge of God, may be obedient unto them.[38]

(H): (*indicating lamp with scepter*) In all your wanderings in darkness, the lamp of the Warden went before you as a guide, although you saw it not. It is a symbol of the hidden light of the gnosis.

(*Pause*)

Honored Warden, I charge you with replacing the initiate between the pillars, at the boundary between the mundane domain and the world of the infinite aeons, there to receive the fourth and final purification and consecration.

[37] *AL* I:12

[38] Adapted from the invocation to the Holy Guardian Angel in *Liber Samekh*

The Hierophant is seated in the east. The Warden directs the initiate to step directly backwards until they stand between the pillars facing east. The Warden returns to their station with the current and is seated.

(H): Honored Sybil and Magus, I charge you with the fourth and final purification and consecration of the initiate, enterer of the threshold, whose eyes have been opened within the Duat, the starry abode, before the divine assembly of the gods of the aeon.

The Sybil takes the chalice from the altar, replacing it with their scepter, and moves with the current to stand before the initiate, purifying them as before.

(S): Be thou pure of body and soul.

The Sybil returns to the altar with the current, replacing the chalice while regaining their scepter.

The Magus takes the incense from the altar, replacing it with their wand, and moves with the current to stand before the initiate, consecrating them as before.

(M): Be thou fervent of body and soul.

The Magus returns to the altar with the current, replacing the incense while regaining their wand.

(H): “I reveal unto you a great mystery. Ye stand between the abyss of height and the abyss of depth.

In either awaits you a Companion; and that Companion is Yourself.

Ye can have no other Companion.”

“My adepts stand upright; their head above the heavens, their feet below the hells.”

“Thus shall equilibrium become perfect.”

“They shall in their turn speak from this Invisible Throne; their words shall illumine the worlds.

They shall be masters of majesty and might; they shall be beautiful and joyous; they shall be clothed with victory and splendour; they shall stand upon the firm foundation; the kingdom shall be theirs; yea, the kingdom shall be theirs. In the name of the Lord of Initiation. Amen.”[39]

The Hierophant rises, descending west to join the candidate.

(H): Please accompany me to the cubical altar of the universe.

Stepping east and then deosil with the current, the Hierophant leads the initiate to the altar, leaving them at its western edge while facing them over the altar from the east.

[39] *Liber Tzaddi*, verses 33-35, 40, 42, 43-44

(H): Let us invoke the epiphany of the gnosis through the symbolic mediation of the sacred synthemata of the Great Rite.

The Hierophant takes The Book of the Law*, and the Sybil the chalice from the altar. The Magus bears their wand. The three symbols are held over the center of the altar in a vertical line, the cup below, the wand of double power held vertically amidst, with* The Book of the Law*, elevated above with both hands.*

(S): None, breathed the light, faint & faery, of the stars, and two. For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance of union. This is the creation of the world, that the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all.[40]

(M): I am the secret Serpent coiled about to spring: in my coiling there is joy. If I lift up my head, I and my Nuit are one. If I droop down mine head, and shoot forth venom, then is rapture of the earth, and I and the earth are one.[41]

Magus dips wand into cup.

(H): Wail, O ye folk of the grey land, for we have drunk your wine, and left ye but the bitter dregs. Yet from these we will distil ye a liquor beyond the nectar of the Gods. There is value in our tincture for a world of Spice and gold. For our red powder of projection is beyond all possibilities. There are few men; there are enough.[42]

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[40] *AL* I:28-30
[41] *AL* II:26
[42] *Liber 7*, VI:36-40

Officers replace altar symbols.

(H): I invite you to drink from the Holy Grail of Abominations, which by the virtue of the lance bears the draught of the Elixir of Life.

Initiate drinks from chalice.

(H): We now present you with *The Book of the Law*. All questions of the Law are to be decided each for themselves.

Hierophant gives the initiate The Book of the Law.

(H): Sister/Brother/Comrade [motto], let me congratulate you in having passed with fortitude through the ritual of your initiation. "Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains."[43] We shall now proceed to instruct you in the mysteries of the Agape Empowerment.

Except for the Magus, the officers return to their stations and are seated. The Sybil goes deosil with the current, and the Hierophant directly east through the pillars.

(M): S/B/C [motto], I shall now proceed to instruct you in the signs, grip and word of the Agape Empowerment.

[43] *AL* II:9

The signs are twofold. The first is called alternatively the Sign of the Enterer, the Sign of Projected Light, or simply the Projecting Sign, and the Sign of Horus. It is made by stepping forward with either foot and vigorously thrusting out the arms parallel with the gaze, the palms held flat with fingers extended. (*The Magus demonstrates during their description, inviting the initiate's imitation.*) This symbolizes the projection of a current of magical force. The magician is thereby represented as a center of light in the cosmos. "Every man and every woman is a star."[44]

The second sign is called the Sign of Silence, or the Sign of Harpocrates, and it follows the first sign. It is made by withdrawing the extended foot, the right arm dropping to the side while the left forefinger is placed on the closed lips. (*Demonstrates, etc*.) It seals the current of force projected by the Sign of the Enterer and represents the magician at rest, absorbed in Gnosis. "therein am I as a babe in an egg."[45]

The grip or token is exchanged by stepping forward with your left foot. I then place my own left foot aside yours and grasp your right hand with mine. (*Done*) It was in this position that you were brought to light and guided through the pillars. The grip demands a word. This word is Thelema, the Greek word for will. It is answered by the word Agape, which signifies love in the Greek language. The words are whispered in the ear while giving the grip as follows. (*Demonstrated*) The grip signifies the greeting of initiates in fellowship, peace and love.

The word of the Agape Empowerment is Ra-Hoor-Khuit, which is a name of Horus, the Egyptian falcon god in his aspect as lord of the Sun and of the twin horizons, symbolically rising as a golden dawn upon the mystical east.

Moving with the current, the Magus is seated while the Sybil joins the initiate.

(S): I will now proceed to enlighten you further concerning the symbolism of the temple of initiation within which we stand.

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[44] *AL* I:3
[45] *AL* II:49

The temple symbolizes the infinite cosmos of time and space within which all beings live and move and have their being.[46] It is described in the *Sepher Yetzirah* or *Book of Formation* as "an abyss of height" and as "an abyss of depth," an "abyss to the east," and "an abyss to the west," "an abyss to the north," and "an abyss to the south."[47] Its three dimensions, six faces, and twelve edges surrounding the central organizing viewpoint of your own experience together correspond to twenty-two paths of wisdom. Represented by the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and their corresponding Tarot images, these paths constitute the symbols of a magical language whereby any idea may be invoked and created, or banished and destroyed.

The hoodwink or blindfold was a symbol of the darkness and ignorance in which you found yourself before being brought to the light of Gnosis. "The Sun, Strength & Sight, Light; these are for the servants of the Star & the Snake."[48]

In the east of the temple is the Stele of Revealing, (*indicates*) ensign of the magical current of Thelema and of the epiphany of the reception of *The Book of the Law*. "That stele they shall call the Abomination of Desolation; count well its name, & it shall be to you as 718."[49] "Set up my image in the East: thou shalt buy thee an image which I will show thee, especial, not unlike the one thou knowest. And it shall be suddenly easy for thee to do this."[50]

The altar (*indicates*) is in the form of a double cube to symbolize the dynamic dialectical relationship uniting the microcosm, or world of personal experience, and the macrocosm of the infinite universe. In the words of the *Emerald Tablet* of Hermes Trismegistos, "Quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius, et quod est superius est sicut quod est inferius, ad perpetranda miracula rei unius."[51] Or, "that which is below is like that which is above, to perpetuate the miracle of unity." The microcosm of the world of human limitations is no different from the macrocosm of divine apotheosis, or enlightened self-realization.

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[46] Paraphrasing *Acts* 17:28
[47] *Sepher Yetzirah* I:5
[48] *AL* II:21
[49] *AL* III:19
[50] *AL* III:21
[51] *Chrysogonus Polydorus* (1541)

Upon the altar are symbols of the four constituent elements of the universe and the text of *The Book of the Law*, standing for the logos, or spiritual word, that mediates the antagonisms of the elements in and through the enunciation of the gnosis of the True Will. "This is of the 4: there is a fifth who is invisible, & therein am I (*points to initiate's heart*) as a babe in an egg."[52] Together, the five elements stand for the Light, Life, Love and Liberty that emanate from the Law of Thelema.

The twin pillars (*indicates*) are those of the magi Hermes Trismegistus and Solomon the Wise. They are also the columns of Jachim and Boaz that stood before the entrance of the Temple of Jerusalem. Together they form the gateway of the Hidden Wisdom. They are polarity and difference, man and woman. Two forces, and one reality that mediates them eternally. Two basal angles of the triangle and one (*indicates altar*) which forms their apex.

The four principal officers are enthroned at the watchtower gates of the quarters of space. The Hierophant's throne is in the East (*indicates*) in the place of the rising sun, as signified by the Banner of the East. They wear the god-form of Ra-Hoor-Khuit who presides over initiation into the mysteries of Thelema.

The Magus (*indicates*) is enthroned at the gate of the South, which is the station of the noontime sun at its highest elevation. They bear the god-form of Hadit, the secret flame that burns in the heart of man, and in the core of every star.

The Sybil (*indicates throne*) has their throne at the gate of the North, the quarter of night and the stars thereof. I assume the god-form of Nuit, the goddess of the heaven of stars and the soul of infinite space.

The Warden (*indicates*) guards the watchtower of the West, which is the place of the setting sun presided over by the Banner of the West. They possess the god-form of Aiwass, the minister and eidolon of the Holy Guardian Angel and of the True Will.

[52] *AL* II:49

The Sybil is seated with the current. The Hierophant joins the initiate, passing directly through the pillars carrying a white robe.

(H): I now invest you with the regalia of the Agape Empowerment, which is a white robe. (*Places on initiate*) Its white color represents that integrity of purpose which is the true sign of the divine gnosis.

I invite you to be seated amongst your fellow stars of the company of heaven.

Hierophant and initiate are both seated.

(H): There is a word to say about the Hierophantic task. Behold! there are three ordeals in one, and it may be given in three ways. The gross must pass through fire; let the fine be tried in intellect, and the lofty chosen ones in the highest. Thus ye have star & star, system & system; let not one know well the other![53]

Honored Warden, I charge you to proclaim before this assembly that the initiate has passed with fortitude through the ordeal of their initiation into the mysteries of the Agape Empowerment.

The Warden goes deosil to the northeast, facing west while elevating their lamp and staff.

(W): Hear ye all, that S/B/C [motto] has been duly and honorably initiated into the Agape Empowerment, and is hereby declared a Thelemite and a magician.

[53] *AL* I:50

(All): So mote it be!

Warden returns to their station and is seated.

Closing (short form):

The Hierophant knocks once.

(H): Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

(All): Love is the law, love under will.

(H): Fellow Stars of the Company of Heaven, our work of the day having been completed, let us depart until such time as we shall gather again. The sun sleeps until it shall sail to another dawn. Therefore, in the name of the Augoeides I now declare this temple closed.

The Hierophant knocks once.

Closing (long form):

The Hierophant knocks once.

(H): Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

(All): Love is the law, love under will.

(H): Fellow Stars of the Company of Heaven, in solidarity of will, please assist me to close this temple of the sacred mysteries.

(All): So mote it be!

(H): Honored Warden, what duty attends the completion of any theurgic rite?

(W): Very Honored Hierophant, to see that the temple is properly tyled.

(H): On behalf of the company of heaven I charge you with the execution of this duty.

The Warden goes to the portal.

(W): (*elevating lamp and staff to the east*) Hekas! Hekas! Estai Bebeloi!

(or) Procul, o Procul, Estai Profani!

In the name of the bornless one, by the power of the hermetic staff and with the guidance of the hidden light, I declare that the shells have been adjured and banished unto their habitations!

The Warden returns to the west and is seated with the current.

(H): Let the mystic reverse circumambulation take place along the orbit of the light.

All present rise. Still moving with the current the officers form a line in the southeast in the order Hierophant, Magus, Sybil and Warden. The procession breaks the current by circling the temple widdershins or counterclockwise with its circumference just inside the four thrones, passing the east three times in the sign of the enterer, but not the sign of silence. Each officer falls out in turn upon reaching their station and remains standing, the Hierophant returning last at the end of their fourth circuit.

(H): The mystic reverse circumambulation symbolizing the ruby sunset of the light is accomplished. Let us adore the visible lord of the universe and space, the sun, and that invisible lord "in ourselves whose name is Mystery of Mystery"[54] which it symbolizes.

All face east.

(All): Holy art thou, lord of the universe! (*sign of light*)

Holy art thou, whom nature hath not formed! (*sign of light*)

Holy art thou, the vast and the mighty one! (*sign of light*)

Lord of the light and of the darkness! (*sign of silence*)

All remain standing.

(H): (*extends arms in sign of Osiris slain*) Khabs.

[54] *Liber XV*, "Of the Ceremony of the opening of the Veil."

(S): (*extends arms*) Am.

(M): (*extends arms*) Pekht.

(S): (*crosses arms in sign of Osiris risen*) Konx.

(M): (*crosses arms*) Om.

(H): (*crosses arms*) Pax.

(M): (*sign of projected light towards the altar*) Light.

(H): (*projected light towards altar*) In.

(S): (*projected light towards altar*) Extension.

All are seated except for the Hierophant, who passes between the pillars and stands to the west of the altar. They extend their staff and hand in the Hebrew gesture of blessing over the elements.

(H): Nothing now remains but to partake together in meditative repose, of the mystic repast, composed of the symbols of the four elements.

"Behold! The Perfect One hath said:

These are my body's elements

Tried and found pure, a golden spoil.

[Fragrance][55] and Wine and Fire and Bread

These I consume, true sacraments,

For the Perfection of the [Soul][56]

For I am clothed about with flesh

And I am the Eternal Spirit

I am the Lord that riseth fresh

From Death, whose glory I inherit

Since I partake with him. I am

The Manifestor of the Unseen

Without me all the land of Khem

Is as it had not been"[57]

I invite you to inhale with me the perfume of this rose, as a symbol of air, (*Done*) to smell the warm fragrance of this fiery incense, (*Done*) to eat with me these cakes of light as types of earth, (*Done*) and finally to drink with me from the Holy Grail bearing the draught of the Elixir of Life. (*Makes cross and circle with chalice and sips*).

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[55] The original text reads "Incense." The change is in accord with the symbolism for the elements used in the Agape Empowerment.

[56] Originally "Oil."

[57] Prayer for the sealing of the pyramid in Crowley's illuminated manuscript copy of *Liber Pyramidos*:

Aleister Crowley *Commentaries on the Holy Books* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1996), 71.

Hierophant is seated. One by one all others present rise and communicate in the order Sybil, Magus, audience clockwise around the Temple beginning in the East and finally the Warden, who finishes the chalice, remaining at the altar.

(H): Honored Warden, I charge you to seal our working with the performance of the lesser banishing ritual of the pentagram.

Done. Warden is seated.

(H): Fellow Stars of the Company of Heaven, our work of the day having been completed, let us depart until such time as we shall gather again. The sun sleeps until it shall sail to another dawn. Therefore, in the name of the Augoeides I now declare this temple closed.

Hierophant knocks once.

Agape Empowerment

Statement of Intent

I the undersigned hereby solemnly affirm that it is in accord with my personal will to morally affirm and cheerfully conform myself to the following ethical prescriptions as a prerequisite for receiving the Agape Empowerment.

First, that I undertake this initiation of my own free will and accord, and that I shall undertake to persevere with honor through the ceremony of my admission.

Second, that nothing concerning the ritual, neither its associated documents and teachings, nor its meetings and proceedings, is secret, and that I shall everywhere openly discuss the Agape Empowerment to any interested parties.

Third, that I accept full personal responsibility for my spiritual practice, and that I shall acknowledge no authority higher than my own autonomous True Will over its interpretation.

Fourth, that I shall not submit myself to the domination of any person, party, substance, or practice such that my self-conscious awareness and free will are impaired.

Fifth, that I shall strive to maintain relationships with fellow practitioners that are fraternal, cooperative, inclusive, and consensual.

Sixth, that I shall dedicate my efforts to the study of the magical arts, and that I shall endeavor to apply them towards the ultimate welfare of others.

Seventh, that I will apply myself to the accomplishment of the Great Work, which is to achieve the Knowledge and Conversation of my Higher and Divine Genius, thereby discriminating the gnosis of my True Will.

Legal Name (print):

Signature:

Magical Motto:

Date and Time of Initiation:

Presiding Officers:

Hierophant: Warden:

Magus:Sybil:

The Agape Empowerment: Ritual of the Equinox

(Version 1.0)

Temple Layout:

As for the Agape Empowerment, with the addition of a black drop cloth and black cape at the stations of the Sybil and Hierophant, respectively. There is no mystic circumambulation during the equinox ritual, and therefore no special clockwise movement in relation to the astral current.

Theurgic God-Forms of the Officers:

At the beginning of the ritual, and after the investiture of the incoming floor team, the god-forms of the officers are as in the Agape Empowerment. However, over the course of the ritual the god-forms change to the following:

Hierophant: Set, visualized as a male human figure wearing a black Egyptian skirt with the head of a Set animal.

Sybil: Isis, visualized as a female human figure wearing a blue Egyptian dress with a throne symbol crowning her head.

Magus: Thoth, visualized as a male human figure wearing a gold Egyptian skirt with the head of an ibis bird.

Warden: Anubis, visualized as a male human figure wearing a white Egyptian skirt with the head of a jackal.

Abbreviations: Hierophant (H), Sybil (S), Magus (M), Warden (W), Incoming Hierophant (I)

Proclamation of the Equinox:

All are seated. Hierophant knocks once with their scepter.

(H): Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.[58]

(All): Love is the law, love under will.[59]

(H): Fellow stars of the company of heaven, we have assembled here today to celebrate the (vernal/autumnal) equinox for (Thelema Temple Number One) of the Agape Empowerment. To this end, I now declare this temple open.

(All): So mote it be!

Hierophant knocks once. All rise.

(H): Honored Warden, proclaim the equinox and announce the abrogation of the password pertaining to the expired semester of our work.

The Warden proceeds to the northeast of the temple and faces west, elevating their lantern and staff.

[58] *AL* I: 40

[59] *AL* I: 57

(W): In the name of the lord of the universe and space, the sun, whose radiant light symbolizes the divine gnosis of the True Will, I proclaim the (vernal/autumnal) equinox, and that the password (…) is abrogated.

The Warden returns to their station and remains standing.

(H): Let us consecrate the return of the equinox and the equilibration of the light.

All face the altar.

(H): Dawn.

(W): Dusk.

(H): East.

(W): West.

(H): Air.

(W): Water.

(All): We are the mediator between them.

All present make the sign of the enterer towards the altar.

(M): Noontime.

(S): Midnight.

(M): South.

(S): North.

(M): Fire.

(S): Earth.

(All): We are the mediator between them.

All present make the sign of the enterer towards the altar.

(H): Creation.

(M): Preservation.

(W): Destruction.

(S): Regeneration.

(All): We are the mediator between them.

All present make the sign of the enterer towards the altar.

(H): Please be seated. (*All sit*)

(H): Let the officers for the expired semester be divested of their insignia and astral images.

The Hierophant removes their lamen, leaving it in the east, and proceeds to the west of the altar where they lay down their wand.

(H): With the expiration of the password (___) I lay down my wand.

The Hierophant takes the rose from the altar and returns to the throne of the east. There they remove their red cape and don the black cape.

(H): I now assume the god-form of Set the usurper, prince of darkness and slayer of Apophis, lord over the void time of the contending forces in search of the mediation of the light. (*They make the sign of Typhon and are seated.*)

The Sybil removes their lamen, leaving it in the north, and proceeds to the west of the altar where they lay down their wand.

(S): With the expiration of the password (___) I lay down my wand.

The Sybil takes the paten from the altar and returns to the throne of the north.

(S): I now assume the god-form of Isis, who bore in her womb the seed of light after the death of Osiris. (*They make the sign of the mourning of Isis and are seated.*)

The Warden removes their lamen, leaving it in the west, and proceeds to the west of the altar where they lay down their staff and lantern. They place the lantern in the center, atop The Book of the Law.

(W): With the expiration of the password (___) I lay down my lantern and staff.

The Warden takes the chalice from the altar and returns to the throne of the west.

(W): I now assume the god-form of Anubis, guardian and guide of all souls that wander in darkness. (*They make the sign of Osiris slain and are seated.*)

The Magus removes their lamen, leaving it in the south, and proceeds to the west of the altar where they lay down their wand.

(M): With the expiration of the password (___) I lay down my wand.

The Magus takes the incense from the altar and returns to the throne of the south.

(M): I now assume the god-form of Thoth, "the Magician and the Exorcist,"[60] whose wisdom renews the light. (*They make the sign of Osiris risen and are seated*)

(H): Let us analyze together the elements of the body of Osiris, dismembered for the regeneration of the world. For the king is dead, and "Liberty stirs once more in the womb of Time."[61]

All stand and face east. Hierophant elevates rose.

(H): Let us adore the universe. Holy art thou, oh air that fills the firmament. Thou art Shu, who bears up your mother Nuit the heavens, so that the space of the world is held open.

[60] *AL* II: 7
[61] Aleister Crowley, "The Next Step" in the "Introduction" to *The Book of the Law*.

The Hierophant makes the astrological sign for Aquarius with the rose towards the east. Setting it down they make the sign of Shu. All present follow suit.

All face south. Magus refreshes and elevates incense.

(M): Let us adore the universe. Holy art thou, oh fire that animates all things. Thou art "the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star."[62]

The Magus makes the astrological sign for Leo with the incense towards the south. Setting it down they make the sign of Neith. All present follow suit.

All face west. Warden elevates chalice.

(W): Let us adore the universe. Holy art thou, oh water, matrix of creation and liquid sustenance of life. Thou art Tefnut, whose vapors bedew the world.

The Warden makes the astrological sign for Scorpio with the chalice towards the west. Setting it down, they make the sign of Mut. All present follow suit.

All face north. Sybil elevates paten.

[62] *AL* II: 6

(S): Let us adore the universe. Holy art thou, oh earth of green and black, of meadows, hills, and valleys. Thou art Geb, whose body shelters the habitations of humanity.

The Sybil makes the astrological sign for Taurus with the paten towards the north. Setting it down, they make the sign of Set fighting. All present follow suit.

All face towards the altar.

(H): Let us adore the quintessential spirit of the elements.

"Now is the Pillar established in the Void; now is Asi fulfilled of Asar; now is Hoor let down into the Animal Soul of Things like a fiery star that falleth upon the darkness of the earth.

Through the midnight thou art dropt, O my child, my conqueror, my sword-girt captain, O Hoor! and they shall find thee as a black gnarl'd glittering stone, and they shall worship thee."[63]

(M): "I am thou, and the Pillar is 'stablished in the void.

Also thou art beyond the stabilities of Being and of Consciousness and of Bliss; for I am thou, and the Pillar is 'stablished in the void."[64]

(W): "Thou shalt rejoice in the pools of adorable water; thou shalt bedeck thy damsels with pearls of fecundity; thou shalt light flame like licking tongues of liquor of the Gods between the pools.

[63] *Liber LXV*, V: 5-6
[64] *Liber LXV*, V: 23-24

Also thou shalt convert the all-sweeping air into the winds of pale water, thou shalt transmute the earth into a blue abyss of wine."[65]

(S): "Ruddy are the gleams of ruby and gold that sparkle therein; one drop shall intoxicate the Lord of the Gods my servant.

And the Lord Adonai delighteth in me, and I bear the Cup of His gladness unto the weary ones of the old grey land."[66]

(H): "They that drink thereof are smitten of disease; the abomination hath hold upon them, and their torment is like the black smoke of the evil abode.

But the chosen ones drank thereof, and became even as my Lord, my beautiful, my desirable one. There is no wine like unto this wine."[67]

All make the sign of the enterer towards the altar, followed by the sign of silence. All sit.

Installation of the Hierophant:

(H): Fellow stars of the company of heaven, please assist me in the installation and investiture of the Hierophant of this temple for the ensuing semester through the celebration of the mystery of the procession of the aeons.

Hierophant raps three times with fist.

[65] *Liber LXV*, V: 27-28
[66] *Liber LXV*, V: 29, 61
[67] *Liber LXV*, V: 62-63

(H): “One is the Magus: twain His forces: four His weapons. These are the Seven Spirits of Unrighteousness; seven vultures of evil. Thus is the art and craft of the Magus but glamour. How shall He destroy Himself?”[68] Great Isis, Lady of the Black Land, what is the place?

(S): Heliopolis, capital of the Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom of Khem, the black land of the Nile river.

(H): Great Thoth, Lord of the Sacred Words, what is the hour?

(M): It is the hour of the equinox, when the contending forces of light and darkness are equilibrated.

(H): Would the incoming Hierophant please rise and stand before the throne of the east. (*Done*) (sister/brother) [motto], you are about to embark upon an ordeal of great import and danger, for the mystery of the equinox of the Gods is symbolized in the rites of death.

“There are four gates to one palace; the floor of that palace is of silver and gold; lapis lazuli & jasper are there; and all rare scents; jasmine & rose, and the emblems of death. Let him enter in turn or at once the four gates; let him stand on the floor of the palace. Will he not sink? Amn. Ho! warrior, if thy servant sink? But there are means and means.”[69]

(M): Now let there be a veiling of this shrine: now let the light devour men and eat them up with blindness![70]

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[68] *Liber I*, verse 00
[69] *AL* I: 51
[70] *AL* II: 14

(S): But I will hide thee in a mask of sorrow: they that see thee shall fear thou art fallen: but I lift thee up.[71]

(H): I ask you then (sister/brother), in all seriousness and solemnity: are you prepared to assay the adventure of the Chapel Perilous and partake of the sacrament of abominations?

The incoming Hierophant answers in the affirmative of their own free will.

Hierophant gives one rap with their fist.

(H): So mote it be!

(M): Thy death shall be the seal of the promise of our agelong love.[72]

(S): Fear not at all; fear neither men nor Fates, nor gods, nor anything.[73]

(H): Anubis, the guide of the dead in the underworld, shall accompany you.

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[71] *AL* II: 53

[72] *AL* II: 66

[73] *AL* III: 17

The Warden joins the incoming Hierophant and begins leading them in a clockwise circumambulation. All other officers rise.

(W): (*during circumambulation*) In the ancient land of Khem, or Egypt, according to the myths of its peoples, the God Osiris Un-Nefer, child of the Sun, ruled as Pharaoh long before the dawn of human history. It was his custom to enter the central sanctuary of the Temple, there to commune in meditation with the Sun his father. He would then depart the Temple through the pylons of its four gates. In conformity with this legend, we shall now make our way towards the gate of the South.

The candidate completes two circumambulations. Upon passing the South the Magus blocks the candidates path.

(M): Halt! (*Done*) Lord Osiris, glad am I to meet you thus alone. My master, your brother Set, lord of darkness, has other plans for you tonight. (*Grabs and holds candidate by the shoulders*) Tell us the password of the temple and abdicate to your brother or I will take your life!

(W): (*for IH*) Servant of my brother Set, whose throne stands at the apex of the polar star, the password of the temple may be disclosed, but it can be understood only by those who have assayed the ordeal of the City of the Pyramids. I am the rightful Pharaoh, and I shall not stand aside for an usurper.

(M): (*shakes candidate by shoulders*) Give me the password, or I will slay you here as we stand!

(W): I shall not.

(M): Give me the secret password!

(W): The secret is for anyone with eyes to see.

(M): Then die!

Magus brushes the candidate across the throat with their right hand, simultaneously releasing their hold and stepping aside. Taking the incoming Hierophant's arm, the Warden now leads them quickly to the West, pausing there.

(W): Dangerously wounded in the throat, Osiris escaped his assailant and attempted to escape from the Western gate of the Temple. However, coming to the West he found the gate barred and impassable. He then proceeded in haste to the Northern gate.

Warden quickly leads candidate to the North. The Sybil blocks the candidates path, grabbing then by the shoulders.

(S): Relinquish the throne to my master Set, master of the red desert sands!

(W): I will not!

(S): Give me the magical password!

(W): I shall not!

(S): Obey my will or die!

(W): I bow not to the false commands of another!

(S): Then die!

Sybil brushes the incoming Hierophant across the heart with their right hand, simultaneously releasing their hold and stepping aside. Taking the candidates arm, the Warden now leads them quickly to the East where the Hierophant blocks the candidates path.

(H): (*grabs IH by shoulders*) My brother Osiris, glad I am to find you thus alone. Long have I sought this opportunity to seize the kingdom from your hands. You shall now relinquish the throne of the Sun to me.

(W): I shall not!

Hierophant begins backing IH towards the center of the Temple, between the pillars, Warden keeping pace. The Magus and Sybil move and stand to the immediate west of their respective pillars, the Sybil taking the black drop cloth with them.

(H): The sovereignty of the Black Land is mine!

(W): Never!

(H): Abdicate!

(W): I will not!

Hierophant has backed IH to the center point of the Temple.

(H): Then die!

Hierophant brushes IH across the waist with their right hand, simultaneously releasing their grip. Warden guides and assists IH to lie on the floor. Magus and Sybil then cover them with the black drop cloth.

(H): Let us recite the mysteries of annihilation.

Officers stand in a cross around the IH. Hierophant East, Warden West, Magus South, and Sybil North, with the pillars between them and the IH.

(Officers): (*alternating verses in clockwise order Hierophant, Magus, Warden, Sybil, etc*)

1. This is the secret of the Holy Graal, that is the sacred vessel of our Lady the Scarlet Woman, Babalon the Mother of Abominations, the bride of Chaos, that rideth upon our Lord the Beast.

2. Thou shalt drain out thy blood that is thy life into the golden cup of her fornication.

3. Thou shalt mingle thy life with the universal life. Thou shalt keep not back one drop.

4. Then shall thy brain be dumb, and thy heart beat no more, and all thy life shall go from thee; and thou shalt be cast out upon the midden, and the birds of the air shall feast upon thy flesh, and thy bones shall whiten in the sun.

5. Then shall the winds gather themselves together, and bear thee up as it were a little heap of dust in a sheet that hath four corners, and they shall give it unto the guardians of the abyss.

6. And because there is no life therein, the guardians of the abyss shall bid the angels of the winds pass by. And the angels shall lay thy dust in the City of the Pyramids, and the name thereof shall be no more.

7. Now therefore that thou mayest achieve this ritual of the Holy Graal, do thou divest thyself of all thy goods.

8. Thou hast wealth; give it unto them that have need thereof, yet no desire toward it.

9. Thou hast health; slay thyself in the fervour of thine abandonment unto Our Lady. Let thy flesh hang loose upon thy bones, and thine eyes glare with thy quenchless lust unto the Infinite, with thy passion for the Unknown, for Her that is beyond Knowledge the accursed one.

10. Thou hast love; tear thy mother from thine heart, and spit in the face of thy father. Let thy foot trample the belly of thy wife, and let the babe at her breast be the prey of dogs and vultures.

11. For if thou dost not this with thy will, then shall We do this despite thy will. So that thou attain to the Sacrament of the Graal in the Chapel of Abominations.

12. And behold! if by stealth thou keep unto thyself one thought of thine, then shalt thou be cast out into the abyss for ever; and thou shalt be the lonely one, the eater of dung, the afflicted in the Day of Be-with-Us.

13. Yea! verily this is the Truth, this is the Truth, this is the Truth. Unto thee shall be granted joy and health and wealth and wisdom when thou art no longer thou.

14. Then shall every gain be a new sacrament, and it shall not defile thee; thou shalt revel with the wanton in the market-place, and the virgins shall fling roses upon thee, and the merchants bend their knees and bring thee gold and spices. Also young boys shall pour wonderful wines for thee, and the singers and the dancers shall sing and dance for thee.

15. Yet shalt thou not be therein, for thou shalt be forgotten, dust lost in dust.

16. Nor shall the aeon itself avail thee in this; for from the dust shall a white ash be prepared by Hermes the Invisible.

17. And this is the wrath of God, that these things should be thus.

18. And this is the grace of God, that these things should be thus.

19. Wherefore I charge you that ye come unto me in the Beginning; for if ye take but one step in this Path, ye must arrive inevitably at the end thereof.

20. This Path is beyond Life and Death; it is also beyond Love; but that ye know not, for ye know not Love.

21. And the end thereof is known not even unto Our Lady or to the Beast whereon She rideth; nor unto the Virgin her daughter nor unto Chaos her lawful Lord; but unto the Crowned Child is it known? It is not known if it be known.

22. Therefore unto Hadit and unto Nuit be the glory in the End and the Beginning; yea, in the End and the Beginning.[74]

[74] *Liber Cheth*

The Warden returns to the throne of the west and removes their cape, leaving it draped on the throne. They are seated in the audience.

(H): Lady Isis, Mother of Magick, what is the hour?

(S): The hour of the equinox of the Gods, when the universe is destroyed and renewed by fire.

(H): Lord Thoth, Magus of wisdom, what is the place?

(M): The delta of the Nile river, amongst the reeds and lilies of the crocodile haunted swamp.

(H): Isis, daughter of the Sun and Queen of Osiris, fleeing from the tyranny of Set searched through the deepening night for her missing consort.

(S): I flew through the fullness of space, exploring the deepest crevices of Geb the Earth and the farthest heavens of Nuit the sky. In all my searching I found not one trace of Osiris my husband. Finally, at the hour of midnight I came to the banks of the Nile delta and found the corpse of Osiris without life. At that moment his son Horus stirred within my womb.

(M): Hearing the weeping of the Goddess I, Thoth the magus, came to her side. I assisted her, adding my magic to hers. The khu of Osiris had risen within the body of Nuit and become the Sun, setting forth upon the sea of space. There he dwells as lord of the dead in Duat, the starry abode, the well of souls. Born now is Horus the avenger, master of the horizons, pillar of his mother, he who binds up the divided land.

(H): For two things are done and a third thing is begun. Isis and Osiris are given over to incest and adultery. Horus leaps up thrice armed from the womb of his mother. Harpocrates his twin is hidden within him. Set is his holy covenant, that he shall display in the great day of M.A.A.T., that is being interpreted the Master of the Temple of A.˙.A.˙., whose name is Truth.[75]

(S): Appear most awful and most mild.

(M): As it is lawful, in thy child.

(H): Isis and Thoth, I shall endeavor with your assistance to raise the incoming Hierophant with the sign of the Strong Grip, or Lion's Paw of Horus, while communicating the new password of the temple. They thereby relinquish the god-form of Osiris and, just as the Sun rises anew in the East with the dawn of the day, they will assume the god-form of Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child, Hierophant of the New Aeon, champion of light, life, love and liberty.

Magus and Sybil uncover IH. Hierophant takes their left hand with their same hand, holding the forearm at the candidate's wrist, the candidate doing the same. The IH rises with the assistance of the three officers. The Hierophant whispers the new password into the IH's ear and releases the grip.

The Magus and Sybil return to their stations and remove their capes, leaving them draped on the thrones. They are seated in the audience.

[75] *Liber A'ash*, verse 7

(H): “So therefore the beginning is delight, and the End is delight, and delight is in the midst, even as the Indus is water in the cavern of the glacier, and water among the greater hills and the lesser hills and through the ramparts of the hills and through the plains, and water at the mouth thereof when it leaps forth into the mighty sea, yea, into the mighty sea.”[76]

Let us proceed to the East, where we invite you to assume your station as Horus the avenger, taking your seat upon the throne of the Hierophant.

Done, the incoming Hierophant dons the lamen and cape of the Hierophant and takes their seat in the east.

(H): “Ra-Hoor-Khuit hath taken his seat in the East at the Equinox of the Gods; and let Asar be with Isa, who also are one. But they are not of me. Let Asar be the adorant, Isa the sufferer; Hoor in his secret name and splendour is the Lord initiating.”[77]

Magicians of (Thelema Temple Number One) of the Agape Empowerment, behold your Hierophant, our Very Honored (sister/brother) [motto], who has been regularly advanced and enthroned in the east, the direction of the golden dawn of light, life, love, and liberty. On behalf of the company of heaven here assembled I proclaim them the revealer of the mysteries among you for the ensuing six months, being a segment of that temporal period through which we are conducted into light. May they oversee the formative images of elemental air, shot through with rosy illumination as they gather themselves about the rising sun. Very Honored (sister/brother), in the presence of the company of heaven here assembled, I call upon you to make your confession.

[76] *Liber A’ash*, verse 39

[77] *AL* I:49

The past Hierophant removes their black cape, leaving it in the east, hands their script to the incoming Hierophant, who now becomes the Hierophant, and is seated in the audience.

(H): (*rises*) My fellow comrades in the Law of Thelema, seeing that the intention of the lesser mysteries, or of external initiation, is by the intervention of the theurgic synthemata of symbolism, ceremony and sacrament, to so energize the self that it may be withdrawn from the attraction of phenomena and delivered from the unconscious absorption therein, whereby we walk in somnambulism, knowing not whence we come nor wither we go; and seeing also, that thus liberated, the self by willed redirection may be brought to the study of divine things possessed of significance and purpose, and that we can thereby undertake the Great Work of demiurgy, which is expressed by love under will towards our fellow creatures and this sacred universe; now, therefore, I confess and testify thereto, from the throne of the east, and I promise, to the best of my ability, to lead you by the theurgic rites of this temple, faithfully facilitated in respectful fellowship with you, that through such love under will we may all be prepared in due time for the greater mysteries, the supreme and inward self-initiation of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

(*pause*)

I now proclaim the new password for the ensuing semester. The password is (___). Let us reintegrate the elements of the temple with the inception of the new current.

The Hierophant takes the rose and goes to the altar, returning it there.

(H): With the inception of the password (___), I claim my wand.

Done. They return to the east and are seated.

(H): On behalf of the company of heaven, I now proceed to invest the officers of this temple for the impeding semester. Let the incoming Sybil present themselves before the east.

(*Done*)

On behalf of the company of heaven, I ordain you Sybil for the ensuing six months. From your throne in the gate of the north, station of the midnight hour when the body of Nuit is unveiled, bend your lambent flame of starry blue over our company, urging us onwards into the infinite adventure of our True Wills. May you purify the temple and the initiate with water, and preside over the powers of elemental earth that gladden the black earth with green growth.

The Sybil salutes the Hierophant with the sign of the enterer, while the Hierophant inclines their wand and directs a current of empowering will into the Sybil's aura, visualized as a diffuse beam of green light.

Sybil: I so will it.

The Sybil goes to the north and dons their robe and lamen. Taking the paten, they return it to the altar.

Sybil: (*retrieving their wand*) With the inception of the password (___), I claim my wand.

The Sybil is seated in the north.

(H): Let the incoming Magus approach the east. From your throne in the

(*Done*)

On behalf of the company of heaven I ordain you Magus for the coming six months. From your station in the south, quarter of the blazing sun at the zenith of noon, burn brightly in every heart, and give us the gifts of death and life throughout your endless orbit. May you consecrate the temple and the initiate with fire, and conduct the coursings of those tracings of intelligible fire that girder the inmost ramparts of the soul.

The Magus gives the sign of the enterer towards the Hierophant, while the Hierophant charges their aura with a ray of red light from their wand.

Magus: I so will it.

The Magus proceeds to the south and puts on their robe and lamen. Taking the incense, they return it to the altar.

Magus: (*retrieving their wand*) With the inception of the password (___), I claim my wand.

The Magus is seated in the south.

(H): Let the incoming Warden come to the east.

(*Done*)

On behalf of the company of heaven I ordain you Warden for the next six months. From your post in the west, place of the dusky horizon of the setting sun, bear word of the liberating Law of Horus to all those who seek the light of gnosis. May you tyle the border of the temple, make

all proclamations and reports, guide the circumambulations of the initiate, and watch over the energies of elemental water, that refresh the wellsprings of creation.

The Warden gives the sign of the enterer towards the Hierophant, while they charge their aura with a blue ray from their wand.

Warden: I so will it.

The Warden goes to the west, donning their robe and lamen. Taking the chalice, they return it to the altar.

Warden: (*retrieving their staff and lantern*) With the inception of the password (___), I claim my staff and scepter.

The Warden checks that the elements are properly arranged on the altar and refreshes the charcoal and incense in the burner. They are then seated in the west.

The incoming officer team may now address the company, and make any announcements.

Closing:

The Hierophant knocks once.

(H): Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

(All): Love is the law, love under will.

(H): Fellow Stars of the Company of Heaven, in solidarity of will, please assist me to close this celebration of the (vernal/autumnal) equinox at (Thelema Temple Number One) of the Agape Empowerment.

(All): So mote it be!

The Hierophant passes between the pillars and stands to the west of the altar. They extend their right hand in the Hebrew gesture of blessing over the elements.

(H): Nothing now remains but to partake together in meditative repose, of the mystic repast, composed of the symbols of the four elements.

"Behold! The Perfect One hath said:

These are my body's elements

Tried and found pure, a golden spoil.

[Fragrance][78] and Wine and Fire and Bread

These I consume, true sacraments,

For the Perfection of the [Soul][79]

[78] The original text reads "Incense." The change is in accord with the symbolism for the elements used in the Agape Empowerment.
[79] Originally "Oil."

For I am clothed about with flesh

And I am the Eternal Spirit

I am the Lord that riseth fresh

From Death, whose glory I inherit

Since I partake with him. I am

The Manifestor of the Unseen

Without me all the land of Khem

Is as it had not been"[80]

I invite you to inhale with me the perfume of this rose, as a symbol of air, (*Done*) to smell the warm fragrance of this fiery incense, (*Done*) to eat with me these cakes of light as types of earth, (*Done*) and finally to drink with me from the Holy Grail bearing the draught of the Elixir of Life. (*Makes cross and circle with chalice and sips*).

Hierophant is seated. One by one all others present rise and communicate in the order Sybil, Magus, audience clockwise around the Temple beginning in the East and finally the Warden, who finishes the chalice, remaining at the altar.

(H): Honored Warden, I charge you to proclaim that the equinox has passed and that the password has been proclaimed.

The Warden proceeds to the northeast and raises their lantern and staff.

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[80] Prayer for the sealing of the pyramid in Crowley's illuminated manuscript copy of *Liber Pyramidos*:

Aleister Crowley *Commentaries on the Holy Books* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1996), 71.

(W): Fellow stars of the company of heaven assembled here today at (Thelema Temple Number One) of the Agape Empowerment. I proclaim that the festival of the (vernal/autumnal) equinox has been duly celebrated, and that the password (___) has been proclaimed, banishing the shells unto their habitations and abodes as the shadows flee the dawning daylight.

(The Warden is seated.)

(H): In the name of the sacred and divine genius I now declare this temple closed.

Hierophant knocks once.

Symbolism of the Agape Empowerment

Frater Peradventura

The Agape Empowerment is derived from the Neophyte ritual of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, adapted to the theology of Thelema as set forth in *The Book of the Law*, and rectified in accord with the Judaic tradition from which its Qabalistic symbolism originates.

As in the Neophyte ritual, the Agape Empowerment symbolically takes place in the Hall of Maat, which is the hall of the judgement of the soul as described in the ancient Egyptian *Book of Coming Forth by Day*, commonly known as the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. In this hall, located in the Duat, or realm of the Gods, the deceased soul, called the Ka, is presented by Anubis, the Jackal headed psychopomp or guide of the dead, to the assembly of the Gods presided over by Osiris, the neter (god) of death and resurrection. The deceased's heart is weighed on a balance with a feather, the hieroglyph for Maat or "truth." If found worthy, they become like Osiris, living on forever in the afterlife despite their physical demise.

In the ritual of initiation used by the Golden Dawn, the Hierophant represents Osiris and the two pillars stand for the pans of the balance of the scales of Maat. As the reception of the candidate proceeds so does the weighing of their soul. In accord with the Rosicrucian mysticism perpetuated by the G.D., Osiris, with whom the initiated candidate is identified, corresponds to the risen Christ of the Christian mysteries, the God-man whose self-divinization is replicated by the magical attainment of the adept.

The Agape Empowerment, however, enacts the mysteries of Thelema in the modern Aeon of Horus, not those of the Aeon of Osiris, which focused on the formula of dying and rising Gods such as Osiris and Christ. As such, and in accord with the magical formulae of *The Book of the Law*, the Hierophant of the temple is the solar deity Horus, who stands for the living pharaoh, high priest and God-king, as opposed to the dead pharaoh, represented by Osiris. Horus knows and does his will among the living, as the sun makes its way across the heavens, unlike Osiris who reigns over the land of the dead. The candidate for initiation in the Agape

Empowerment continues to be identified with Osiris, but only during the ordeal of their initiation. At the conclusion of the ritual, having received empowerment, they symbolically become identified with Horus. In other words, the candidate is Osiris, while the initiate is Horus.

The temple is symbolically overlaps the lower half of Qabalistic Tree of Life, representing the five lower sephiroth of Malkuth, Yesod, Hod, Netzach and Tiphareth. The station of the Warden in the west is in Malkuth, bordering upon the realm of the qlipoth, or shells, the demonic domain of unadjusted forces disruptive towards the purposes of the True Will. The altar lies along the thirty-second path of Tav, corresponding to the Tarot trump entitled "The Universe," depicting the four elements of creation gathered together by the dance of the Goddess Shakti, the creative energy of formation. The bottom cube of the altar is in Malkuth, while the upper cube is in Yesod, upon which are the symbols of the four elements whose combination provides the foundation ("Yesod" means "foundation" in Hebrew) for the organized life of the initiate. The northern pillar stands for Hod, and the southern Netzach, and the pillars simultaneously represent the pillars of severity and mercy, respectively, upon the Tree of Life, whose bases are in Hod and Netzach. The stations of the Sybil and Magus are further associated with the two pillars of the Tree. Finally, the station of the Hierophant lies in Tiphareth, corresponding to the sun. The Hierophant is Ra-Hoor-Khuit, which can be translated: "Horus who is Ra (the sun), lord of the two horizons."

The theurgic synthemata, or magically efficacious symbols, upon the altar are arranged per the correspondence between the four compass directions and the four Platonic elements of air and the east, fire and the south, water and the west, and earth and the north.

The visible stations of the temple consist in the four officers of the quarters, namely the Hierophant, Sybil, Magus and Warden. These are described in the text concerning "Temple Layout" and in the speeches of the officers within the Agape Empowerment.

The general symbolism of the furniture of the temple, including the Stele of Revealing, the twin pillars and the double cubicle altar, is further elucidated in the Sybil's lecture to the initiate that concludes their reception.

Invisible Stations in the Agape Empowerment:

The invisible stations are not directly represented by physical objects or persons in the temple. Rather, they have their primary existence on the "astral plane," built up in the imaginations of the officers and audience of the ritual, just as the God-Forms of the officers are visualized as coinciding with the physical bodies of the officers.

The Four Archangels: There is an angel guarding each compass quarter of the temple, faced inwards with outstretched wings. They appear when evoked by the pentagram ritual, and remain in place throughout the remainder of the empowerment, gradually fading away after the closing. The correspondence of the angels to the quarters in the Rectified Ritual of the Pentagram is based on the Rabbinic Midrash commenting on the book of Numbers. Gabriel is in the east, Michael in the south, Raphael in the west, and Gabriel in the north. Gabriel is visualized in a yellow robed bearing a sword, the weapon of air. Michael is robed in red and bears a staff, the weapon of fire. Raphael is robed in blue and bears a chalice, the weapon of water. Uriel is robed in green and bears a disk, the weapon of earth.

Thoth: The ibis headed scribe of the Gods is glimpsed through the portal of the Stele of Revealing as if at a distance beyond the eastern limit of the temple. He stands in Kether on the Tree of Life in the sign of the enterer, projecting a current of milky white astral light into the temple through the Stele, enlightening the understanding of all present with the gnosis and empowering their theurgic rites, as the symbolical synthesis of all the invisible hierarchies of Gods evoked by the Agape Empowerment, but not otherwise directly represented therein. Although the light flows evenly throughout the ritual, it rotates in a clockwise or deosil direction after the mystical circumambulation of the officers, and returns to a non-rotating state of uniform illumination after the mystical reverse circumambulation during the closing.

Harpocrates: The infant Horus is visualized as a blue, human headed infant in a fetal position, enclosed in a transparent blue egg, hovering between the two pillars at heart level. He represents the higher and divine genius, whose presence is conceived within the candidate as they are brought between the pillars of initiation.

Isis and Nephthys: Isis, the consort of Osiris, is a white robed human headed Goddess who wears a crown in the shape of a throne. Nephthys, her sister, is the companion of Set, and appears the same as Isis, except that her robes are black. They correspond to, and are visualized as superimposed over, the white and black pillars, respectively, facing west with their arms crossed in the sign of Osiris risen.

Maat: The Goddess of the adjustment of forces called "truth" is a white robed human headed figure, crowned with a feather. She is enthroned above and midway between the pillars, facing west, with her feet at the level of the tops of Isis and Nephthys' crowns. She balances the fulcrum of the scales of a balance above her lap, the pans of which are above the heads of the pillar Goddesses. As pans oscillate and then return to equivalence during each of the four purifications and consecrations of the candidate for initiation.

Apophis: The serpent of chaos represents the unadjusted forces preceding the formation of the cosmos, and stands for the lower and demonic self in contrast to the higher and divine genius. He is visualized as a black snake coiled beneath the floor of the temple, below the midpoint of the pillars at the intersection of the paths of Samekh and Peh.

Osiris: The Past Hierophant is a greenish black skinned mummy located in the far west of the temple behind the station of the Warden, propped upright against the wall in an open coffin with their arms crossed in the sign of Osiris risen.

The Children of Horus: At the cross-quarters or corners of the temple are the four Children of Horus, who watch over the organs of the candidate as the components of their existence are differentiated, analyzed and reassembled over the course of their initiation, just as Osiris was dismembered and then reconstructed. The children are visualized at heart level in the niches of the cross-quarters in the form of ovoid canopic jars, each capped with the appropriate head of its Child. Duamutef, in the southeast, has the head of a jackal and guards the candidate's heart and lungs. Hapi, in the southwest, has the head of an ape and watches over the candidate's small intestine. Kabekhsenuf is in the northwest, is falcon headed, and guards the candidate's gall bladder and liver. Finally, Imset, who is in the northeast and has a human head, watches over the candidate's large intestine and stomach.

The Forty-Two Assessors: Ranged about the perimeter of the temple high up along the edge of the ceiling are seated forty-two angels, corresponding to the divine forty-two letter name of YHVH, who watch and record the progress of the ritual. They also correspond to the forty-two Nomes, or regions of ancient Egypt, thereby symbolically standing for the whole of the magical universe, or being of the initiate. The Assessors stand and sit with the audience, making whatever signs the congregation does over the course of the ritual.

The forty-two letter name is formed from the initial letters of the forty-two words of the prayer called *Ana Bechoach*, which is part of the preliminary morning service, the *Birchot Ha*, or dawn blessings, recited each day by observant Jews preceding the *T'philit Shacharit*, or dawn prayers. It acts as a substitute for the daily sacrifice once performed at the Jerusalem Temple, destroyed in ancient times by the Romans. As such, it effects an atonement of the human and divine domains which in the Agape Empowerment is equated with the magical equilibration of the candidate within the Hall of Maat. This magical adjustment is overseen by the assessors, hence their magical correspondence with the forty-two letter name in the ritual.

The *Ana Bechoach* prayer is rhymed, and consists of six words in each of seven lines, as follows:

אנא בכח גדלת ימינך תתיר צרורה.

קבץ רנת צמך שגבנו טהרנו נורא.

נא גבור דורשי יחודך כבבת שמרם.

ברכם טהרם רחמם צדקתך תמיד גמלם.

חסין קדוש ברב טובך נהל צדתך.

יחיד גאה לעמך פנה זוכרי קדשתך.

שועתנו קבל ושמע צעקתנו יודע תעלמות.

"By the great power of thy right hand, O set the captive free.

Revered God, accept thy people's prayer; strengthen us, cleanse us.

Almighty God, guard as the apple of the eye those who seek thee.

Bless them, cleanse them, pity them; ever grant them thy truth.

Mighty, holy God, in thy abundant grace, guide thy people.

Exalted God, turn to thy people who proclaim thy holiness.

Accept our prayer, hear our cry, thou who knowest secret thoughts."[81]

The forty-two letter name formed from the *Ana Bechoach* is therefore as follows:

אבגיתצקרעשטנננגדיכשבטרצתגחקבטנעיגלפזקשקוצית

The names of the forty-two assessors are listed on the Papyrus of Nebseni in the collection of the British Museum (Number 9,900, sheet 30) and are transliterated by E. A. Wallace Budge in his *The Gods of the Egyptians*.[82] These names, and their correspondences with the letters of the forty-two letter name, the Sephiroth of the Tree of Life, and the Qabalistic parts of the soul, are as follows:[83]

NameLetterSephirothPart of the Soul

1. Usekht-nemmat AlephKetherYechidah

2. Hept-shet BethKetherYechidah

3. Fenti Gimel ChokmahChiah

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[81] Philip Bernbaum (trans.), *Daily Prayer Book (Ha-Siddur Ha-Shalom)* (New York, NY: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1949), 33-36.

[82] E. A. Wallace Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (2 vols.) (New York, NY: Dover, 1969), vol. 1, 419.

[83] The additional correspondences to the Sephiroth and the parts of the soul were promulgated at the Whare-Ra Temple of the Stella Matutina in New Zealand. Note that the cited text is riddled with errors, here corrected.

Pat Zalewski, *Z-5 Secret Teachings of the Golden Dawn: Book I The Neophyte Ritual 0=0* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1991), 71-2.

4. Am-khaibetuYod ChokmahChiah

5. Neha-hauTav BinahNeshamah

6. RertiTzaddi BinahNeshamah

7. Maati-f-em-tes QophChesedRuach

8. Neba-per-em-khetkhetReshChesedRuach

9. Set-kesuAyinChesedRuach

10. Uatch-nes ShinChesedRuach

11. QertiTethChesed Ruach

12. Hetch-abehu NunChesedRuach

13. Am-senf NunGeburahRuach

14. Am-beseku GimelGeburahRuach

15. Neb-MaatDalethGeburahRuach

16. ThenemiYodGeburahRuach

17. Aati KaphGeburahRuach

18. Tutu-f ShinGeburahRuach

19. Uamemti BethTipharethRuach

20. Maa-an-fTethTipharethRuach

21. Heri-seruReshTipharethRuach

22. KhemiTzaddiTipharethRuach

23. Shet-kheruTavTipharethRuach

24. Nekhen GimelTipharethRuach

25. Ser-kheruChethNetzachRuach

26. Basti QophNetzachRuach

27. Hra-f-ha-f BethNetzachRuach

28. Ta-retTethNetzachRuach

29. Kenemti NunNetzachRuach

30. An-hetep-fAyinNetzachRuach

31. Neb-hrauYodHodRuach

32. Serekhi GimelHodRuach

33. Neb-abui LamedHodRuach

34. Nefer-TemPehHodRuach

35. Tem-sep ZayinHodRuach

36. Ari-em-ab-f QophHodRuach

37. Ahi-mu ShinYesod Nephesh

38. Utu-rekhit QophYesod Nephesh

39. Neheb-nefertVauYesod Nephesh

40. Neheb-kauTzaddiMalkuthGuph

41. Tcheser-tepYodMalkuthGuph

42. An-a-f TavMalkuthGuph

The Formula of the Magick of Light:

The ritual may be subjected to qabalistic analysis. The opening of the Agape Empowerment has eleven steps, corresponding to the descending order of the ten sephirah of the Tree of Life, in addition to the eleventh sephiroth Daath. These eleven steps further

correspond to the verses of the hermetic invocation called the General Exordium,[84] which is recited during the opening by the officers in addition to its sequel the particular exordium. The steps are as follows:

One. *The speech in the silence.* Kether. Hierophant's knock to initiate the ritual. Declaration of the Law. Statement of Intent of the ritual.

Two. *The words against the sons of night.* Chokmah. Warden's tyling of the temple. All give sign of light to the altar.

Three. *The voice of Thoth in the universe in the presence of the eternal.* Binah. Recitation of the General and Particular Exordiums.

Four. *The formulas of knowledge.* Chesed. Proclamation of nature of the four officers.

Five. *The wisdom of breath.* Geburah. Warding of the temple via purification, consecration, and the vibration of the divine names in the Rectified Ritual of the Pentagram.

Six. *The radix of vibration.* Tiphareth. Mystic circumambulation with the current of the gnostic light.

Seven. *The shaking of the invisible.* Netzach. Adoration of the visible lord of the universe and space.

Eight. *The rolling asunder of the darkness.* Hod. Warden's declaration of the opening of the temple.

Nine. *The becoming visible of matter.* Yesod. Words of power with signs towards the altar.

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[84] The idea of correlating the General Exordium to the opening portion of the Neophyte ritual derives from teachings associated with Whare Ra Temple in New Zealand. The specific correspondences developed in this commentary differ significantly from the New Zealand G.D. tradition here cited.

Pat Zalewski (ed.), "Commentary on the General Exordium" in *Z-5: Secret Teachings of the Golden Dawn* (St. Paul: MN, Llewellyn Publications, 1991), 140-145.

Ten. *The piercing of the coils of the stooping dragon.* Malkuth. Hierophant's knock.

Eleven. *The breaking forth of the light. All these are in the knowledge of Thoth.* Daath. The initiation of the candidate into the gnosis. Closing with the mystic repast of the four elements.

The order of the ten sephiroth having been established, the initiation that follows may be divided into twenty-two components corresponding the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, with all of their symbolic associations, as follows:

Aleph, the candidate

Beth, the officers of the temple, the initiators

Gimel, entrance of the candidate

Daleth, first purification

Heh, first consecration

Vav, Hierophant's acknowledgement of statement of intent

Zayin, candidate's declaration of their will to proceed

Cheth, first circumambulation

Lamed, first challenge

Yod, second circumambulation

Kaph, second challenge

Teth, third circumambulation

Mem, candidate placed between the pillars

Nun, candidate passed between the pillars

Samekh, Hierophant's instruction and prayer to the Augoeides

Ayin, final purification and consecration

Peh, procession to the altar, illustration of the Great Rite

Tzaddi, instruction in signs, words, and tokens

Qoph, instruction in temple symbolism

Resh, the initiate is robed

Shin, the Warden announces the completion of the initiation

Tav, the closing, including the mystic repast

Upon Atu XXI: The Universe are depicted the four living creatures of the vision of Ezekiel, symbolizing the four elements set about the dancing goddess at the center of the image, who signifies spirit. Likewise, the ceremony of the closing of the hall may be further analyzed in terms of the five elements and their associations with the Pentagrammaton, יהשוה, the five-lettered divine name.

Yod, (fire) Hierophant's declaration of purpose, Warden's tyling of the temple

Heh, (water) mystic reverse circumambulation and adorations

Shin, (spirit) mystic repast

Vav, (air) Warden performs pentagram ritual

Heh, (earth) Hierophant declares closing and gives final knock

The magical formula of the Enterer of the Threshold can be used to develop rituals based on the Agape Empowerment for personal use. For example, a talisman can be charged by passing the material basis of the sigil through a ceremony following the steps of the initiation ritual, with the talisman taking the place of the candidate. Appropriate ritual actions analogous to the stages of the initiation are applied to the talisman, activating it as a magical object. Other operations are possible, and the initiate is encouraged to experiment with their own creative variations.

The History Lection

Frater Peradventura

(Version 1.1)

0. This is the history of the system of initiation known as the Agape Empowerment. Prior to their displacement by the secular market relations of industrialized society, the traditions of pre-modern "religion" developed a body of psycho-social techniques of self-transformation. These techniques of magic and mysticism—or simply "Magick," a term inclusive of both categories—constitute the study and practice of the initiates of the Agape Empowerment. Our system of Magick has, furthermore, been brought into relationship with the cultural priorities of modernization though our alignment with the formulae of the Aeon of Horus and the revelation of *The Book of the Law*.

1. Magick is a synthetic category historically derived from the concept of theurgy in the Roman Empire of late antiquity, especially as theorized by the neo-platonic philosopher Iamblichus. In his work *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians*, Iamblichus defines theurgy as the participation, through cultic ritual observances, in the creative activity of the divine governance of the cosmos, resulting in the divine possession, purification, and elevation of the soul.

2. With the rise of Christianity, the pagan temples of antiquity were closed, their rituals and wisdom forgotten. However, the techniques of theurgy were perpetuated as esoteric practices within the monotheistic religions of the aeon of Osiris. Thus, the monastic exercises of Catholic mysticism, the Rosicrucian circles and magical freemasonry of Protestant spirituality, Jewish Qabalah, and Islamic Sufism all developed a theurgic dimension congruent with their respective theological priorities. However, these systems were all limited by the ideology of medieval life, framed and contextualized by metaphysical, spiritualistic, and supernatural concepts.

3. The founding of the Theosophical Society and movement by Helena Blavatsky in 1875, at the hectic height of European colonialism, provided a post-Christian context for the modern

reconstruction of theurgy. Blavatsky's "occult science," based in part on the earlier writings of Eliphas Levi, the magus of the Second French Empire, succeeded in theorizing a modern version of theurgy. To provide her teachings with an authoritative pedigree, Blavatsky promoted the mythology of the Great White Brotherhood of ascended mahatmas, secret masters of wisdom who guide the course of human destiny. This fictional brotherhood served as a cover for the very real activities of Blavatsky and her agents. A fundamentalist allegiance to this mythology eventually overwhelmed the transformative potential of Theosophy, and the society declined in relevance accordingly.

4. The primary historical vehicle for a fuller revival of theurgy as modern Magick was the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which began initiating candidates in London in 1888. The G.D. offered instruction in practical occultism, providing a set of ritual practices through which its initiates acquired the magical powers described in Theosophical teachings. For a time, the Golden Dawn prospered, in the process elaborating a sophisticated magical system synthesizing the diverse lore of traditional religious spirituality. However, the order's perpetuation of the Theosophical myth of the secret masters as the alleged source of the order's authority led in its turn to scandal and schism.

5. Two lineages devolved from the break-up of the original G.D. in 1900: the Stella Maututina in London, composed of the rebel faction, and the Paris based Alpha et Omega, consisting in the membership that had remained loyal to the G.D.'s Chief Adept, MacGregor Mathers, whose leadership had been challenged in the rebellion. These in turn are the source of the two major branches of the Golden Dawn tradition in the United States, derived from the teachings of Israel Regardie (Ad Majoram Adonai Gloriam) and Paul Foster Case (Perserverantura). Regardie was trained in a temple of the Stella Maututina that had survived in England into the 1930's, while Case had earlier, in the 1920s, been an initiate and chief of an American temple of the Alpha et Omega.

6. The Master Therion, known to the vulgar world as Aleister Crowley, whose number is 666, the number of the Great Beast, the prophet of the apocalypse of the ending of the Christian age, first rose to notoriety during the demise of the original Golden Dawn. Beginning

his career as an adept of the G.D., the Beast went his own way after the schism, formulating the theory and practice of Magick, based on the philosophy of Thelema, upon the foundation of the revelation of *The Book of the Law* on April 8, 9, and 10 of 1904. His theory, practice, and philosophy of Magick completed the modernization of theurgy.

7. Crowley founded or appropriated two magical orders: the A.˙.A.˙., a teaching order working a version of the G.D. magical system, organized through private teacher student relationships, and omitting group ritual activity, and the O.T.O., a para-masonic outer order operating as a semi-public social club for Thelemites. Following his death in 1947, a lack of effective leadership in the O.T.O. led to the order's decline. Eventually, Major Grady McMurtry (Hymenaeus Alpha 777) led a major revival of the O.T.O. from the San Francisco Bay Area in the '70s and '80s. His headquarters, Thelema Lodge, continued operations as a significant center of magical activity following Hymenaeus Alpha's death in 1984.

8. Meanwhile, The A.˙.A.˙., given its decentralized structure, gradually evolved into a network of autonomous and independent lineages, usually descended from two major branches: an "exclusive" branch associated with the Brazilian Marcello Motta, who spawned several mutually contradictory successors as the "Head of Thelema," and the Estai lineage of A.˙.A.˙., an "inclusive" branch derived from the American Phyllis Seckler (Meral) and her initiator Jane Wolf (Estai).

9. In 1989, in order to facilitate high quality group ritual work falling outside the parameters of the A.˙.A.˙. system, three senior adepts of the Estai lineage of A.˙.A.˙., James Eshelman, Anna Kria-King, and Phyllis Seckler, co-founded the Temple of Thelema (T.˙.O.˙.T.˙.), as a teaching order practicing the initiatory and magical system of the Golden Dawn, brought up to date with the Aeon of Horus. T.˙.O.˙.T.˙.'s charter derives from Fraternitas L.V.X. Occulta (F.L.O.), itself a successor group of Paul Foster Case's Builders of the Adytum (B.O.T.A.), and ultimately of the Alpha et Omega.

10. In the summer of 1996, Nathan Bjorge (Peradventura) was initiated into the O.T.O. at Thelema Lodge, at this time a vibrant community of practicing magicians. His adventures over the next eight years of close association with the lodge are too varied and protracted to

adequately summarize here. Suffice it to say that he busied himself with the study and practice of magic and mysticism in the company of numerous companions. He experienced his first intimations of gnosis in the form of a Dhyana upon the transcendental quality of consciousness, described as the "synthetic unity of apperception" by Immanuel Kant. This noetic experience encouraged him to persist in the Great Work.

11. Seeking to deepen his understanding of Dhyana through experimentation with a more structured regimen of spiritual exercises, Peradventura established contact with the Estai lineage of A.˙.A.˙., and in 1999 was initiated into Agape Temple #4 of the Temple of Thelema. Over the following four and a half years he was an active participant in temple ritual, serving in several officer roles while systematically working the various grades of the Golden Dawn system. Simultaneously, he regularly attended classes in Magick and astrology given by Phyllis Seckler at her home in Oroville, California.

12. In 2004, the gnosis of his True Will having ripened within him, Peradventura undertook and completed the Abramelin operation to achieve the knowledge and conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel, and was duly stabilized in the gnosis of his divine genius in the trance called atmandarshana, where the self is identified with the impersonal transcendence of consciousness. This awareness sustained him through the ordeals that followed.

13. Also in 2004, Peradventura helped found the Open Source Order of the Golden Dawn, an anti-authoritarian experiment in cooperatively co-creating a ritual working group. The O.S.O.G.D.'s connections with the Israel Regardie branch of the G.D. tradition, via Chic and Tabitha Cicero's group, allowed him to deepen his comparative understanding of the G.D. system. Although the concept of the O.S.O.G.D. was sound, its execution proved deeply flawed. Within a year of its founding, the order had been suborned into an authoritarian clique, whose abusive governance directly contradicted its founding principles. Peradventura soon found himself pushed out of the order, in company with numerous other disgruntled ex-members. The experiment of the Open Source Order failed due to the refusal of its membership to take the order's purpose and values seriously, thereby allowing critics to be systematically isolated and purged. Peradventura treated his experience in the spirit of scientific experiment and attempted

to learn from its results. In 2019, overcome by its internal political contradictions, the O.S.O.G.D. officially ceased to initiate.

14. The fate of the O.S.O.G.D. was symptomatic of the authoritarianism that overwhelmed the magical community at the turn of the century. By 2004, the political climate of the scene had become toxic and hazardous. The situation became sufficiently distracting that Peradventura resigned his membership in all the magical organizations of which he was a member, as an act of moral protest, and to concentrate on the personal work-on-self incumbent upon him as an adept. The next eleven years served as a period of silence for him, as he completed his academic training, wrote poetry, and otherwise advanced his personal self-cultivation. During this period, there was one major exceptions to his general policy of withdrawal from the larger community, namely his involvement with Temple Sophia.

15. In the company of several senior initiates of the now defunct Thelema Lodge, Peradventura helped found Temple Sophia, which preserved and perpetuated the weekly performance of the independent Gnostic Mass from 2005 to 2014. For some time, the temple prospered, but eventually Temple Sophia's congregation declined. In 2014 the temple was evicted, and successfully relocated to a house in central Oakland. Renamed Temple Sophia Babalon Caledonia, the weekly performance of the Gnostic Mass continued, and the temple soon stabilized around a group of magicians looking to deepen and expand their practice.

16. In the meantime, eleven years had passed since Peradventura's performance of the Abramelin working, and the trance of atmandarshana had deepened into sivadarshana, in which the divine form of consciousness dissolves, disclosing a creative nothingness underlying phenomenal being. During his graduate studies, he conceived an innovative Thelemic theology, "liberation theurgy," to serve as the theoretical basis for a renewed engagement with the possibilities of initiatory practice. While completing his doctorate, as Temple Sophia Babalon Caledonia gradually established itself in its new lodgings, Peradventura slowly gathered the materials needful to regenerate a system of initiation and magical training.

17. So, therefore, in the fullness of time, some twenty years after taking his first magical initiation, Peradventura, with the assistance of Carrie Sealine (Zohar), founded the Agape

Empowerment in 2016. We practice a set of group rituals working the Golden Dawn magical system within the aeon of Thelema. In our work is concentrated the accumulated wisdom of the two major American Golden Dawn lineages descended from Paul Case and Israel Regardie, as well as the Estai lineage of A.˙.A.˙.. We sidestep their political baggage and authoritarian assumptions through our practice of syndicalist anarchy, allowing us to operate with the fullest autonomy, without the use or need for the incorporation of our free activity in the alienated form of commodified property, or oaths of secrecy and obedience to external authority figures. We are post-secular, treating Thelema as a living, evolving philosophy, subject to self-criticism, rather than as the reified object of religious faith or belief. We are open to the interpretation of Magick and Thelema in anti-metaphysical, non-supernatural, and dialectical materialist modes. Our goal is nothing less than the liberation of the freely creative human potential of all those whose will is to participate in ritual with us. To you who now read this document, we extend an invitation to join with us in the wonderous adventure of this Great Work of “love under will.”

First Knowledge Lecture

compiled by Frater Peradventura from traditional sources

The following symbolic system constitutes the alphabet of Magick and should ideally be committed to memory. The precise interpretation of each symbol is context dependent and situationally variable, and the following descriptions should therefore be considered as guides for further exploration, not as lists of fixed definitions.

1. The ***Three Principles*** of nature in western alchemy are called Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, and should not be confused with the substances indicated by these names in modern chemistry. The pair Sulphur and Mercury originate in the works of "Geber" (Jabir ibn Hayyam, 721-815 C.E.), to which Paracelsus, writing in the 16th century, added Salt, creating a triadic scheme of principles which subsequently became standard. The alchemical principles are not themselves substances. Rather, they indicate three symbolic aspects in terms of which any substance undergoing a process of transformation can be analyzed.

Salt symbolizes immediately sensible bodily corporality, or mere physical presence. Abstract existence.

Sulphur designates the form or "soul" of bodies, their manifestation of distinct sensible qualities. Formal particularity.

Mercury names the transformative potential inherent to temporal existents, whereby they undergo change. Quintessential being.

According to Indian Ayurveda, the three principles of nature are Tamas, Rajas, and Sattva.

Tamas is torpid, sluggish, and dense

Rajas is rapid, energetic, and decisive

Sattva is equilibrated, meditative, and calming

The Golden Dawn tradition posits a "correspondence" between the alchemical and Ayurvedic systems as follows:

Salt is like Tamas

Sulphur is like Rajas

Mercury is like Sattva

Symbolic correspondence does not imply the direct identification of related terms. Correspondence rather opens a space of hermeneutical dialog between historically distinct contexts of linguistic usage, permitting a cross-cultural dialectical interchange and mutual enrichment of ideas.

2. The ***Four Elements*** of ancient Greek physics are the physical substances Earth, Air, Water, and Fire. It was theorized that various mixtures of these four constitute the diversity of material objects. The Golden Dawn tradition adds Spirit as a fifth, quintessential element. In a modern context, the four elements symbolize physical properties encountered in the phenomenal world as well as the components of the human person.

Earth signifies solidity. Body.

Air symbolizes transparency. Intellect.

Water stands for fluidity. Emotion.

Fire designates the transformative. Intention.

Spirit corresponds to the systemic totality that is the resultant of the four. The True Will.

The Golden Dawn tradition relates the four elements to the four worlds of the Jewish Qabalah:

Earth corresponds to *Assiah* (Heb.) the world of action. The phenomenal world of immediate sensible appearances.

Air corresponds to *Yetzirah* (Heb.) the world of formation. The mental world of imaginative images.

Water corresponds to *Briah* (Heb.) the world of creation. The world of abstract ideas and unconscious potencies.

Fire corresponds to *Atziluth* (Heb.) the archetypal world. The world of primordial potentialities.

In the Qabalistic system of Isaac Luria (1534-1572) there is a further fifth world antecedent to the four, from which they emanate. This world, corresponding to Spirit, is composed of the almost unimaginably vast body of *Adam Kadmon*, the heavenly form of God whose image, according to Genesis 1: 26, the human form recapitulates.

Although the schemata of the four (or five) worlds can be interpreted in Platonic metaphysical terms as a map of spiritual ascent into a divine dimension beyond the cosmic universe, it can also be read in historical-realist terms as a description of the ontological sheaths of the existential structure of human existence, whose self-relational systemic totality, when

ideally explored and aligned, discloses the form of the Higher Divine Self as the sign of the self-realization, or gnosis, of one's own deepest potential for being.

3. The ***Seven Planets*** recognized by classical astrology are the Sun, Luna (the Moon), Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Modern astronomical observation has identified Uranus and Neptune as additional planets, as well as numerous asteroids and dwarf planets, all of which can be invested with astrological significance. The Agape Empowerment's usage largely focuses on the traditional set of seven planets, occasionally supplemented by Uranus and Neptune. In the Golden Dawn tradition, the classical seven planets primarily symbolize the psychological faculties of the microcosm, while the outer planets signify transpersonal factors effecting the psyche. Planetary symbolism may be further enriched through consideration of the mythological lore of their associated divinities.

Sun / Sol, self-consciousness, ego awareness. Apollo, charioteer of the sun.

Moon / Luna, intuition, sub-consciousness. Artemis, the huntress.

Mercury, rationality. Hermes, the messenger.

Venus, emotion. Aphrodite, goddess of love.

Mars, desire. Ares, god of war.

Jupiter, direction. Zeus, king of the gods

Saturn, memory. Chronos, god of time.

Uranus, mysticism. Ouranos, the primordial heavens.

Neptune, magic. Poseidon, god of the seas.

4. The ***Twelve Signs of the Zodiac*** represent personality types:

Aries, the ram is active, dominating, independent, and resourceful.

Taurus, the bull is stable, reliable, intuitive, practical, and creative.

Gemini, the twins is discriminating, intellectual, friendly, and communicative.

Cancer, the Crab is compassionate, nurturing, introverted, and protective.

Leo, the lion is charismatic, forceful, expressive, and generous.

Virgo, the virgin is prudent, sensitive, domestic, and careful.

Libra, the scales is harmonious, judicious, modest, and impressionable.

Scorpio, the scorpion is focused, energetic, courageous, and wrathful

Sagittarius, the archer is intelligent, foresighted, willful, and defiant.

Capricorn, the goat is sensual, ambitious, melancholy, and practical.

Aquarius, the water-bearer is emotional, eloquent, resourceful, and dreamy.

Pisces, the fishes is inspiring, orderly, peaceful, and sensitive.

The twelve signs are evenly distributed into to four *triplicities* corresponding to the four elements.

Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius are fire signs.

Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn are earth signs.

Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius are air signs.

Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces are water signs.

The signs are further divided into three *quadratures*, based on their positions relative to the seasons of the year.

The *Cardinal* signs are Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn. The season changes as the sun enters these signs.

The *Fixed* signs are Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius. These signs mark the midpoints of the seasons.

The *Mutable* signs are Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, and Pisces. The sun is in these signs during the decline of each season.

Also, Aries and Libra are *Equinoctial* signs, which the sun begins to enter on the Spring and Autumnal equinoxes, respectively.

Cancer and Capricorn are *Tropical* signs, in which the sun is furthest elevated or declined from the equator.

The *dignities* of the planets are as follows: the planets each possess *rulership* over the sign or signs that are most complimentary, and are said to be in their *detriment* when in the sign or signs that are incompatible. When a planet transits a sign it rules it is said to be in its *home*. The sign next in rank of compatibility after a planet's home is the sign of its *exaltation*, and the worst aspected location for a planet, even worse than its detriment, is the sign of its *fall*.

Essential Dignities of the Planets:

Planet	**Rulership**	**Detriment**	**Exaltation**	**Fall**
Sol	Leo	Aquarius	Aries	Libra
Luna	Cancer	Capricorn	Taurus	Scorpio
Mercury	Gemini, Virgo	Sagittarius,Pisces	Virgo	Pisces
Venus	Taurus, Libra	Scorpio, Aries	Pisces	Virgo
Mars	Aries, Scorpio	Libra, Taurus	Capricorn	Cancer
Jupiter	Sagittarius,Pisces	Gemini, Virgo	Cancer	Capricorn
Saturn	Capricorn,Aquarius	Cancer, Leo	Libra	Aries
Uranus	Aquarius	Leo	Scorpio	Taurus
Neptune	Pisces	Virgo	Aquarius	Leo

5. The ***Hebrew Alphabet*** consists of twenty-two letters, written right to left. Each letter stands for a number, and has a meaning. For, example, the word “aleph” is also the word for an ox. Five letters have a “final” form, and are written differently when they occur at the end of a word. They have a higher number value when so placed.

Letter	**Name**	**Sound**	**Value**	**Meaning**
א	Aleph	A	1	Ox
ב	Beth	B	2	House
ג	Gimel	G	3	Camel
ד	Daleth	D	4	Door
ה	Heh	H	5	Window
ו	Vau	V	6	Nail
ז	Zain	Z	7	Sword
ח	Cheth	Ch	8	enclosure, fold
ט	Teth	T	9	Serpent

י	Yod	I	10	palm of the hand
כ, ך	Kaph	K	20, 500	Fist
ל	Lamed	L	30	ox goad
מ, ם	Mem	M	40, 600	Water
נ, ן	Nun	N	50, 700	Fish
ס	Samekh	S	60	Prop
ע	Ayin	Aa	70	Eye
פ, ף	Pe	P	80, 800	Mouth
צ, ץ	Tzaddi	Tz	90, 900	Fishhook
ק	Qoph	Q	100	back of the head
ר	Resh	R	200	Head
ש	Shin	Sh	300	Tooth
ת	Tav	Th	400	Cross

All Hebrew letters are consonants. Vowels are not represented in ancient written Hebrew, although modern Hebrew uses a system of vowel pointings to indicate phonetic pronunciation.

The three letters Aleph, Mem, and Shin are called *mother letters*, and are attributed to the elements air, water, and fire by the *Sepher Yetzirah*.

The seven letters Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaph, Peh, Resh, and Tav are *double letters*, and correspond to the seven classical planets.

The remaining twelve letters Heh, Vav, Zayin, Cheth, Teth, Yod, Lamed, Nun, Samekh, Ayin, Tzaddi, and Qoph are *single letters*, associated with the twelve zodiacal signs.

Precisely which planets and signs correlate with which letters varies amongst the *Sepher Yetzirah*'s different manuscript traditions, and diverse internally self-consistent systems of

correspondence co-exist within the larger qabalistic tradition. The Golden Dawn's system of attributions is based upon symbolic associations that emerge from corresponding each of the twenty-two letters to the twenty-two Major Arcana, or pictorial trumps, of the European Tarot.

6. The Thirty-Two Paths of the Tree of Life

King David's dedication of the temple (I Chronicles 29:11) is interpreted by the Jewish qabalistic tradition as naming ten divine "spheres" or *sephiroth* (singular form: sephirah) representing different aspects or valences of the divine being. Together with the sacred letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the ten sephiroth and the twenty-two letters constitute the thirty-two "paths of wisdom" described in the *Sepher Yetzirah* whereby the universe is said to have been created by a divine being. By theurgic analogy, the Thelemic magician actualizes their self-divinity by deploying, through ritual and rite, the symbolic potencies represented by the thirty-two paths to bring the virtual reality of their social-psychological experience "under will." The ten sephiroth are associated with the planets in their orbital order according to Ptolemaic cosmology, where the earth is posited at the center of the universe.

Number	**Name**	**Name in Hebrew**	**Meaning**	**Planet**
One	Kether	כתר	Crown	Prime Mover
Two	Chokmah	חכמה	Wisdom	Celestial Sphere
Three	Binah	בינה	Understanding	Saturn
Four	Chesed	חסד	Mercy	Jupiter
Five	Geburah	גבורה	Severity	Mars
Six	Tiphareth	תפארת	Beauty	Sun
Seven	Netzach	נצח	Victory	Venus

Eight	Hod	הוד	Splendor	Mercury
Nine	Yesod	יסוד	Foundation	Moon
Ten	Malkuth	מלכות	Kingdom	Earth

The ten sephiroth are symbolically arranged in a pattern called the Etz Hayim (Heb.) or Tree of Life linked together by twenty-two paths corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The geometry of the paths varies among the traditional sources. The arrangement used in the Golden Dawn traditions originally derives from an illustration in the Jesuit archivist and hermetic philosopher Athanasius Kircher's *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (1654).

7. General Attributions of the Tarot

The Tarot deck has seventy-eight cards, consisting of twenty-two trumps, sixteen court cards, and forty numbered cards evenly divided into four suits. The Agape Empowerment uses the system of images and correspondences of the Thoth Tarot created by Frieda Harris and Aleister Crowley.

Each of the twenty-two trumps are assigned to a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Depending on whether that letter is a single, double, or mother letter each trump further corresponds to an astrological sign, planet, or element, respectively. The two final trumps have a double attribution to assign all five elements to trumps, despite there being only three mother letters.

Atu	**Trump**	**Letter**	**Attribution**
0.	The Fool	Aleph	Air
I.	The Magus	Beth	Mercury
II.	The Priestess	Gimel	Luna
III.	The Empress	Daleth	Venus
IV.	The Emperor	Tzaddi	Aries

V.	The Hierophant	Vau	Taurus
VI.	The Lovers	Zayin	Gemini
VII.	The Chariot	Cheth	Cancer
VIII.	Adjustment	Lamed	Libra
IX.	The Hermit	Yod	Virgo
X.	Fortune	Kaph	Jupiter
XI.	Lust	Teth	Leo
XII.	The Hanged Man	Mem	Water
XIII.	Death	Nun	Scorpio
XIV.	Art	Samekh	Sagittarius
XV.	The Devil	Ayin	Capricorn
XVI.	The Tower	Pe	Mars
XVII.	The Star	He	Aquarius
XVIII.	The Moon	Qoph	Pisces
XIX.	The Sun	Resh	Sol
XX.	The Aeon	Shin	Fire, Spirit
XXI.	The Universe	Tav	Saturn, Earth

The suits correspond to the elements and the qabalistic worlds. The numbered cards in each suit represent the operation of the ten sephiroth of the Tree of Life within each of the four elemental worlds.

Suit	**World**	**Element**
Trumps	Adam Kadmon	Spirit
Wands	Atziluth	Fire
Cups	Briah	Water
Swords	Yetzirah	Air

Disks	Assiah	Earth

The court cards symbolize the operation of the four letters of the divine name יהוה in the four worlds.

Court Card	**Divine Family**	**Letter of יהוה**	**Qabalistic World**	**Element**
Knight	Father	Yod	Atziluth	Fire
Queen	Mother	Heh (initial)	Briah	Water
Prince	Son	Vau	Yetzirah	Air
Princess	Daughter	Heh (final)	Assiah	Earth

Depending on the suit, each court card indicates an elemental sub-division. For example, the Queen of Swords stands for Water of Air, the Prince of Disks represents Air of Earth, and the Knight of Wands signifies Fire of Fire.

8. The following simple ***Meditation Practice*** cultivates the control of the mind, the basis of authentic magical attainment. Find a posture that is firm and steady. Sitting cross-legged on a cushion, or in a straight-backed chair, are both effective. Place your attention on your breath. Breathe in comfortably to a slow count of four, then out to a similar count of four. Do not hold your breath, avoiding any sense of strain while respiring.

This practice should be sattvic and calming, producing mental relaxation and emotional equanimity. The regular practice of meditation assists the magician to counterbalance the more actively passionate energies invoked by their magical work. Periods of formal meditation practice from ten to thirty minutes at least once a day are suggested. Tiredness should be avoided. The mind should be simultaneously alert and relaxed while meditating.

9. Thelemic protocol

It is customary when greeting another Thelemite to say: “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” to them, at which point they reply: “Love is the law, love under will.”

Before meals the following exchange is led by an orator, whom the guests question.

Orator: (Knocks 3-5-3) Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Guests: (together) What is thy Will?

O: To eat and to drink.

G: To what end?

O: That my body may be fortified thereby.

G: To what end?

O: So that I might accomplish the Great Work.

G: Love is the law, love under will.

O: (Knocks once) Fall to.

Every Thelemite has the right to interpret *The Book of the Law* and other Holy Books of Thelema for themselves, and to freely share their interpretations with others. Hermeneutical coercion is prohibited in Thelemic exegesis. Theological persuasion, however, is welcome.

10. Other recommended practices

It is highly recommended that magicians keep a diary of their practices, experiences, and reflections.

Creating a personal temple space at home or some other private location provides the magician with a place for their personal practices separated from the distractions of public space.

Concerning the personal temple Israel Regardie writes, "The student can easily adapt any fair-sized room to the exigencies of a Temple. The writer has worked in one hardly larger than a long cupboard, about ten feet long by six or seven wide. All furniture from the centre should be cleared away, leaving a central space in which he may freely move and work. A small table covered with a black cloth will suffice for the Altar, and the two Pillars may be dispensed with but formulated in the imagination as present. He may find it very useful to paint flashing Angelic Tablets according to the instructions found elsewhere, as well as the Banners of the East and West, placing these in the appropriate cardinal corners of his improvised Temple. If he is able to obtain small plaster-casts, bull and man—and place these in the proper stations, they will be found together with the Tablets to impart a considerable amount of magical vitality and atmosphere to the Temple. What actually they do bestow is rather subtle, and perhaps indefinable. They are not absolute essentials, however, and may be dispensed with. But since Magic works by the intervention of symbol and emblem, the surrounding of the student's sphere with the correct forms of magical symbolism, assists in the impressing of these symbols within the aura or sphere of sensation, the true magical Temple."[85]

11. A Course of Study

The following works are recommended for the initiate of the Agape Empowerment as a general course in those systems of Magick, mysticism and philosophy that inform the Thelemic tradition.

[85] Israel Regardie, *What You Should Know About the Golden Dawn* (Phoenix, AZ: Falcon Press, 1983), 134-5.

1. *Magick: Book 4, parts I-IV*, by Aleister Crowley, including the amalgamated appendices

2. *Bhagavad Gita*, avoid the Hare Krishna version, as the commentary is sectarian

3. *The Diamond Sutra*, the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajnaparamita) in 300 lines

4. *Yoga Sutras*, by Patanjali, the commentaries of Vivekananda, Christopher Isherwood, and B.K.S. Iyengar are recommended

5. *Chuang Tzu*, the Sacred Books of the East series, edited by Max Müller, provides a full translation of the text

6. *Bezels of Wisdom*, by Ibn al' Arabi

7. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, by Gershom Scholem

8. *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, edited by S.L.M. Mathers

9. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, by William James

10. *De Natura Deorum* (*The Nature of the Gods*), by Cicero

11. *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians*, by Iamblichus, the translation by Thomas Taylor is recommended

12. *Corpus Hermetica* and the *Asclepius*, attributed to Hermes Trismegistus

13. *The Tarot: A Key to the Wisdom of the Ages*, by Paul Foster Case

14. *The Antichrist*, by Friedrich Nietzsche

15. *A Common Faith*, by John Dewey

The Qabalah: The Best Training for Memory

Frater TO MEΓA ΘHPION

*(*Magick Without Tears*, Fourth Letter)*

Cara Soror,

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Now you must learn Qabalah. Learn this Alphabet of Magick. You must take it on trust, as a child does his own alphabet. No one has ever found out why the order of the letters is what it is. Probably there isn't any answer.

But our Magical Alphabet is primarily not letters, but figures, not sounds but mathematical ideas. Sir Humphrey Davy, coming out of his famous illumination (with some help from Nitrous Oxide he got in) exclaimed: The Universe is composed solely of ideas. We, analyzing this a little, say: The Universe is a mathematical expression.

Sir James Jeans might have said this, only his banker advised him to cash in on God.[86] The simplest form of this expression is 0=2, elsewhere expounded at great length.[87] This 2 might itself be expressed in an indefinitely great number of ways. Every prime number, including some not in the series of "natural numbers" is an individual. The other numbers with perhaps a few exceptions (e.g. 418) are composed of their primes.

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[86] Sir James Hopwood Jeans (1877-1946) was a British cosmologist and popular writer on scientific subjects. He was an idealist, holding that matter evolves from mind, not the reverse. In *The Mysterious Universe* (1944) he writes, "the Universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine." Crowley's remarks criticize Jeans' willingness to present the conclusions of science in a form compatible with Christian piety, and the resultant popularity of his books.

[87] See Crowley's נראשית: *An Essay in Ontology* and letter five in *Magick Without Tears*, "The Universe: The 0=2 Equation."

Each of these ideas may be explained, investigated, understood, by means very various. Firstly, the Hebrew, Greek and Arabic numbers are also letters. Then, each of these letters is further described by one of the (arbitrarily composed) "elements of Nature;" the Four (or Five) Elements, the Seven (or Ten) Planets, and the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac.

All these are arranged in a geometrical design composed of ten "Sephiroth" (numbers) and twenty-two "Paths" joining them; this is called the Tree of Life.

Every idea soever can be, and should be, attributed to one or more of these primary symbols; thus green, in different shades, is a quality or function of Venus, the Earth, the Sea, Libra, and others. So also abstract ideas; dishonesty means "an afflicted Mercury," generosity a good, though not always strong, Jupiter; and so on.

The Tree of Life has got to be learned by heart; you must know it backwards, forwards, sideways, and upside down; it must become the automatic background of all your thinking. You must keep on hanging everything that comes your way upon its proper bough.

At first, of course, all this is dreadfully confusing; but persist, and a time will come when all the odd bits fit into the jig-saw, and you behold—with what adoring wonder!—the marvelous beauty and symmetry of the Qabalistic system.

And then—what a weapon you will have forged!

What power to analyze, to order, to manipulate your thinking!

The Book of the Law itself insists upon the fact that it contains a Qabalah which was beyond me at the time of its dictation, is beyond me now, and always will be beyond me in this incarnation. Let me direct your spiritual attention at *AL*, I: 54; I: 56; II: 54-55; II: 76; III: 47.

Now there was enough comprehensible at the time to assure me that the Author of the Book knew at least as much Qabalah as I did. I discovered subsequently more than enough to make it certain without error that he knew a very great deal more, and that of an altogether higher order, than I knew; finally, such glimmerings of light as time and desperate study have

thrown on many other obscure passages, to leave no doubt whatever in my mind that He is indeed the supreme Qabalist of all time.

When you are a real adept at all these well-known calculations "prepare to enter the Immeasurable Region"[88] and dig out the Unknown.

You must construct your own Qabalah!

Nobody can do it for you. What is your own true Number? You must find it and prove it to be correct. In the course of a few years, you should have built yourself a Palace of Ineffable Glory, a Garden of Indescribable Delight. Nor Time nor Fate can tame those tranquil towers, those Minarets of Music, or fade one blossom in those avenues of Perfume!

Humph! Nasty of me: but it has just struck me that it might be just as well if you made a Sepher Sephiroth of your own! What a positively beastly thing to suggest! However, I do suggest it.

After all, it's simple enough. Every word you come across, add it up, stick it down against that number in a book kept for the purpose. That may seem tedious and silly; why should you do all over again the work that I have already done for you? Reason: simple. Doing it will teach you Qabalah as nothing else could. Besides, you won't be all cluttered up with words that mean nothing to you; and if it should happen that you want a word to explain some particular number, you can look it up in my *Sepher Sephiroth*.

By this method, too, you may strike a rich vein of words of your own that I have altogether missed.

No doubt, a Really Great Teacher would have said: "Beware! Use my Dictionary, and mine alone! All others are spurious!" But then I'm not a R.G.T. of that kind.

For a start, of course, you should put down the words that are bound to come in your way in any case: numbers like 11, 13, 31, 37 and their multiples; the names of God and the principal angels; the planetary and geomantic names; and your own private and particular

[88] This phrase occurs during the reception of the candidate in the Zelator 1=10 grade of the G.D.

name with its branches. After that, let your work on the Astral Plane guide you. When investigating the name and other words communicated to you by such beings as you meet there, or invoke, many more will come up in their proper connections. Very soon you will have quite a nice little Sepher Sephiroth of your very own. Remember to aim, above all things, at coherence.

It is excellent practice, by the way, to do some mental arithmetic on your walks; acquire the habit of adding up any names that you have come across in your morning's reading. Nietzsche has well observed that the best thoughts come by walking; and it has happened to me, more than once or twice, that really important correspondences have come, as by a flashlight, when I was padding the old hoof.

You will have noticed that in this curt exposition I have confined myself to Gematria, the direct relation of number and word, omitting any reference to Notariqon, the accursed art of making words out of initials, like (in profane life) Wren and Gestapo and their horrid brood, or to Temurah, the art of altering the position of the letters in a word, a sort of cipher; for these are almost always frivolous. To base any serious calculations on them would be absurd.[89]

Love is the law, love under will.

Fraternally,

666

P.S. You should study *The Equinox*, Vol. I, No. 5, *The Temple of Solomon the King* for a more

[89] Readers are cautioned, here and elsewhere in Crowley's writings, to be aware of his frequent stylistic use of ironic hyperbole in order to generate reading pleasure through sympathetic identification of the reader with his teaching voice. Notariqon and Temurah are, of course, sometimes useful in Qabalistic interpretation. Crowley is merely taking note that he uses them less than gematria. Literalists beware!

elaborate exposition of the Qabalah.[90]

[90] These writings, and others, including the gematria dictionary *Sepher Sephiroth* referenced by Crowley, are anthologized by Israel Regardie in *777 and Other Qabalistic Writings of Aleister Crowley*, Samuel Weiser, 1973.

Liber Resh vel Helios sub Figura CC[91]

Frater TO MEΓA ΘHPION

0. These are the adorations to be performed by aspirants to the A.˙.A.˙..[92]

1. Let him greet the Sun at dawn, facing East, giving the sign of his grade.[93] And let him say in a loud voice:

Hail unto Thee who art Ra in Thy rising, even unto Thee who art Ra in Thy strength, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the Uprising of the Sun.

Tahuti standeth in his splendour at the prow, and Ra-Hoor abideth at the helm.

Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of Night!

2. Also at Noon, let him greet the Sun, facing South, giving the sign of his grade. And let him say in a loud voice:

Hail unto Thee who art Ahathoor in Thy triumphing, even unto Thee who art Ahathoor in Thy beauty, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the Mid-course of the Sun.

Tahuti standeth in his splendour at the prow, and Ra-Hoor abideth at the helm.

Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of Morning!

3. Also at Sunset, let him greet the Sun, facing West, giving the sign of his grade. And let him say in a loud voice:

Hail unto Thee who art Tum in Thy setting, even unto Thee who art Tum in Thy joy, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the Down-going of the Sun.

Tahuti standeth in his splendour at the prow, and Ra-Hoor abideth at the helm.

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[91] The Book of the Face of the Sun, Under the Figure 200

[92] The initials A.˙.A.˙. symbolize the spirit of gnosis in human history.

[93] Initiates of the Agape Empowerment may use the Sign of the Enterer as the sign of their grade.

Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of Day!

4. Lastly, at Midnight, let him greet the Sun, facing North, giving the sign of his grade. And let him say in a loud voice:

Hail unto Thee who art Khephra in Thy hiding, even unto Thee who art Khephra in Thy silence, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the Midnight Hour of the Sun.

Tahuti standeth in his splendour at the prow, and Ra-Hoor abideth at the helm.

Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of Evening!

5. And after each of these invocations thou shalt give the sign of silence, and afterwards thou shalt perform the adoration that is taught thee by thy Superior.[94] And then do thou compose Thyself to holy meditation.

6. Also it is better if in these adorations thou assume the God-form of whom thou adorest, as if thou didst unite with Him in the adoration of That which is beyond Him.[95]

7. Thus shalt thou ever be mindful of the Great Work which thou hast undertaken to perform, and thus shalt thou be strengthened to pursue it unto the attainment of the Stone of the Wise, the Summum Bonum, True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness.

The Adorations

"these are the adorations, as thou hast written" – *AL* III: 38

[94] Traditionally, the "adorations" consist of a portion of Crowley's poetic paraphrase of the inscription upon the Stele of Revealing, as incorporated into the text of *The Book of the Law*, chapter III, verses 37-38.

[95] Ra is falcon headed; Ahathoor is a human headed goddess with the horns of a cow; Tum is an ithyphallic (phallically erect) human headed male god; Khephra is a winged scarab beetle bearing the solar disk.

Unity uttermost showed!

I adore the might of Thy breath,

Supreme and terrible God,

Who makest the gods and death

To tremble before Thee:—

I, I adore thee!

Appear on the throne of Ra!

Open the ways of the Khu!

Lighten the ways of the Ka!

The ways of the Khabs run through

To stir me or still me!

Aum! let it fill me!

The Light is mine; its rays consume

Me: I have made a secret door

Into the House of Ra and Tum,

Of Khephra and of Ahathoor.

I am thy Theban, O Mentu,

The prophet Ankh-af-na-khonsu!

By Bes-na-Maut my breast I beat;

By wise Ta-Nech I weave my spell.

Show thy star-splendour, O Nuit!

Bid me within thine House to dwell,

O wingéd snake of light, Hadit!

Abide with me, Ra-Hoor-Khuit!

The Rectified Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram

(Version 3.0)

VITRIOL: Visita Interiorae Terrae; Rectificando Invenies Occultam Lapidem[96]

The Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram, taught to the Neophyte of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and carried into Thelema by Aleister Crowley, is a basic magical working that can be used to banish or invoke emotional and psychic energies in a ritual space. This LRP rectifies earlier versions by replacing unclear, transposed, or seemingly garbled Judaic ritual elements with clear and unambiguous Hebrew language from Lurianic, Zoharic, Kabbalistic, Ashkenazi Hasidim, Alexandrian (Philo), Palestinian (Heichalot, Midrashic), Babylonian (Talmudic), and Judaean/Israelite (Torah) sources. This material dates from several centuries before the common era until the sixteenth century, that is, early modernity and represents a highly concentrated synthesis of Jewish mystical and magical thought and practice.

The transliteration for the Hebrew given here is based on the current standard pronounciation of Hebrew in most Jewish settings. Israel Regardie was perfectly correct in his decision not to stress a particular dialect form of Hebrew over another and to acknowledge its varieties. Since the formation of a modern Hebrew-speaking state, there is a standard Sephardi pronounciation according to the late antique/early medieval Masoretic tradition for those who come to Hebrew with or without a traditional dialect of origin. The Hebrew text with vowel points and a guide to their pronounciation is appended. In general, syllabic stress is ultimate and the vowels monophthong, that is, with a single auditory quality. There are a few exceptions, though, that are important. The *tzerei* in netzach forms the diphthong /ae/. The *patach* followed by a *yod* makes the diphthong /ai/, so *Adonai*. The final /i/ articulates the *yod* and completes the divine name.

The complete phrase for the qabalistic cross is adapted from 1 Chronicles 29:10-11, transliterated as follows: L'cha [Adonai] ha-gedulah,v'ha-gevurah, v'ha-netzach, v'ha-hod, ki kol

[96] Visit the interior of the earth and you will discover, by rectification, the occult stone.

ba-shamayim u'va'aretz l'cha [Adonai] ha-mamlacha, v'ha-mitnaseh l'chol l'rosh. Me'olam v'ad olam. Amen.

Rectified Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram

i. Touching the forehead say L'cha (Yours [are]),

ii. Touching the right shoulder say Ha-gedulah (the magnificence)

iii. Touching the left shoulder say V'ha-gevurah (and the power)

iv. Touching the breast say V'ha-tiferet (and the harmony)

v. Touching the right hip say V'ha-netzach (and the victory)

vi. Touching the left hip say V'ha-hod (and the beauty)

vii. Touching the generative organ say Ki kol ba-shamayim u'va-aretz (for all in the heavens and on the earth [are yours])

viii. Touching the ground say L'cha ha-mamlacha (Yours is the kingdom)

ix. Raising the hands to the breast say,

x. V'ha'mit'na'seh l'chol l'rosh (and you are exalted to the head of all [things])

xi. Clasping the hands upon the breast say Me'olam v'ad olam, Amen (from infinity to infinity, amen[97])

xii. East: earth pentagram, Yod Hey Vav Hey (may be vibrated as individual letters Yod, Hey, Vav, Hey, or as consonants followed by the open breath: Yah, Vah, Hah, Vah, or vocalized as two syllables in a complete breath: inhale Yah, exhale Vah)

xiii. South: same, Adonai

xiv. West: same, Eh'he'yeh

[97] Alef mem non (amen) means, among other things, "faithful." It is also an acronym of El Melech Ne'eman (El Faithful—in the sense of enduring or everlasting—King). It is also the same string of consonants as Crowley's Aughmn in the Gnostic mass.

xv. North: same, Ah Ga La Ah—Atah Gibor L'olam Adonai (You are infinitely strong, Adonai)[98]

xvi. Extending the arms in the form of a cross say,

xvii. Before me Gavriel;

xviii. Behind me Raphael;

xix. On my right hand, Michael;

xx. On my left hand, Uriel; [99]

xxi. For about me flames the Pentagram,

xxii. And in the Column stands the six-rayed Star, Shechinat El.

xxiii-xxxiii. Repeat (i) to (xi), the Qabalistic Cross.

[98] The power of resurrection.

[99] Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar (Numbers Rabbah) 2:10.

Genealogy and Rectification of the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram:

An Exploration and Exercise of Jewish Magical Roots

in Western Esoteric and Neopagan Praxis, and as a New Jewish Imaginary

סימה חנה בבלוןSoror

VITRIOL: Visita Interiorae Terrae; Rectificando Invenies Occultam Lapidem[100]

"Visit the interior of the earth; by rectification will you discover the Occult Stone." Sometime in the fifteenth century a fictional alchemist named Basilius Valentinus is alleged to have adapted the common name for sulfuric acid, vitriol, into a verbal formula, like a spell or instruction, to effect the perfect alchemical interactions of mercury, sulfur and salt capable of transmuting base metal into fine. According to Valentinus, or rather his late sixteenth–early seventeenth century creators, it is through "rectification" or *rectificando* that one achieves the desired alchemical end with the materials found within the earth's core. Rectification may be interpreted as repeated experimentation, refinement of technique or material, but in any case points to a process by which elements are transformed by the will and practice of the *chymist*. The "occult" or hidden philosopher's stone, which effects the changes without itself changing and is thus the key to immortality or as the sentence concludes, *veram medicinam*, a true medicine.

But the notion of alchemical transmutation can be expanded to include the cross-cultural, seemingly immortal movement of ritual practice, language, symbolism, and effect. By what alchemy, then, does a ritual come into being? How does magical ritual, for example, flow in and out, through and across cultures? How is it transformed in the process? What is necessary for its temporal and geospatial endurance? And, given that cross-cultural movement of any kind takes place within historical contexts of colonial domination and hegemony, religious, military, and otherwise, themselves involved in processes of mutability.

[100] Basilius Valentinus, *Azoth, ou le moyen de faire l'or caché des philosophes, de frère Basile Valentin* by Basilius Valentinus; Christofle Perier; Jeremie Perier. (French) Paris: Chez Ieremie & Christofle Perier, au Palais, MDCXXIV 1624. (French); (German): Hesse, Germany: Johann Thölde, 1602.

This paper explores these questions by tracing a genealogy of the neopagan Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram (LRP). This genealogy does not, strictly speaking, follow direct paths of historic transmission, but rather locates sparks of thought as they flare into expression in a multiplicity of traditions at various points in time. These flares signal the persistence and transmutation of foundational Western religious ideas—what Robert Yelle has called "semiotic ideologies"—such as temple, priest, sacrifice, and word, and point to their magical efficacy, having been in use continuously for so many millennia.[101]

The LRP is perhaps the most widely practiced magical rite in the neopagan world today, with variants among such disparate groups as Thelemites (Crowley-derived practices), Wiccans (Gardner-derived practices), and Golden Dawn ceremonial magicians (classical Western esoteric practices derived from European Romantic Protestantism).[102] A short ritual of elemental banishment or invocation, the LRP is appropriate for establishing or dismantling magical working space. It is easy to learn, with rich aural, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic components; typically, it is the first spell new magicians master as Neophytes. If "success is thy proof,"[103] then the LRP has proven its practical reliability for over one hundred years. And like any successful recipe, it has been handed on and circulates, each generation adapting it to a particular cultural and historical moment.

As a product of the free appropriation of non-Christian traditions in Christian-dominated Europe (France), the LRP carries with it faint but unmistakable Jewish traces. The LRP employs Jewish/Hebrew divine names as found in Torah and daily prayer, summons the archangels in accordance with rabbinic midrash and bedtime prayer, and suggests the embodied qabalistic Tree of Life in the so-called "kabbalistic cross." This project investigates the Jewish genealogical strata that provide the magical foundation for this ritual that can create or dissolve sacred spacetime.

One by-product, a sort of magical child, or the excess of exuberance of this investigation is a "rectified" LRP, which includes the full textual language to which "traditional" versions only

[101] Robert A. Yelle, "Semiotics" in *Methods of Religious Studies*, edited by Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, New York: Routledge, 2011, 360.
[102] Tim Maroney, sacred-texts.com/bos/bos026.htm.
[103] Book of the Law 3:42

allude. By replacing the highly artificial magical language of esoteric incantation with the highly artificial natural language of the poetry of the Davidic court (and other, more recent, sources from the late-antique Roman and medieval European Jewish worlds), the rectified LRP restores something that was never lost. By delving deeply into the interior, so to speak, of the ritual's history and mythology—its earth—the secret stone of the ritual's power is revealed, and strengthened in the revelation. Having clarified the various strata of Jewish elements in the LRP, and having revealed its Jewish contours, the project concludes with the argument that much contemporary Western magical practice not only derives from Jewish sources such as the Book of Chronicles, rabbinic midrash, and the Zohar, but also can be said to constitute a new form of Jewish magical practice; one, however, that takes place outside of Judaism.

By practicing rituals and studying texts that appropriate and synthesize Jewish sources, one becomes Jewish without the necessity of personal Jewish antecedents or of connections to any particular strand of previous Jewish cultural imaginaries. This is a semiotic practice that recontextualizes ancient Jewish words and symbols for post-religious and post-secular magical ritual use—a use that is also acknowledged and practiced within more directly linked Jewish genealogical communities, such as *Chabad* Hasidism, and practiced but unacknowledged in mainstream Reform, Conservative, Modern Orthodox, and Renewal Judaism.

This sort of genealogy is a fittingly alchemical method for the study of magical practice. One discovers the "occult stone," that is, the alchemical ingredient that turns base metal into gold, deep in the heat of the earth's interior, to which one arrives through a process of rectification. The first movement of rectification is from mythology to history, as mythology provides the cover for historical religious innovation. The second movement brings history back to mythology in order to follow the magical (in this case) ideas and techniques to particular strands of the cultural web. These movements take us to the Judaic roots of Western magical practices as well as carry Judaic theurgy into new contexts. This particular rectification works simultaneously to transmute two ills: the first is the Christian esoteric tradition's lingering anti-Judaism—a defensive posture rooted in the cultural misappropriation of Jewish language and techniques. The second is contemporary Judaism's dissociation from its own theurgic past

and present unwillingness to actively engage the potential of Jewish magic to revivify mainstream diasporic and dismantle Israeli state Judaism.

This project grew out of a year-long (March 2016–2017) study of the origins of Thelema, the magical system developed by Aleister Crowley from Jewish and Christianized Kabbalah of the Golden Dawn and Rosicrucian esoteric traditions of Northern and Western Europe, South Asian Hindu and Buddhist practices, his Victorian-era English fundamentalist Christian upbringing, and his own intelligent and highly educated imagination. As mentioned above, the first part of this paper presents the LRP and explores its mythological history as a magical practice received in Rosicrucian-derived traditions. The second part analyzes the ritual's historical mythology as a combination of potent Jewish spells that serve to summon the deity into the body of the mage and the ritual space. I cannot provide a survey of the work done on the LRP as the academic study of Thelema is in its infancy, and that of Esotericism in general is in its toddlerhood, but I would like to thank Nathan Bjorge most gratefully for organizing the vast materials comprising the histories of the Golden Dawn and Thelema and for presenting them to me with clarity, coherence, and connectivity.

Mythological History of The Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram

According to the esoterica website kheper.net, the history of the lesser ritual of the pentagram is "obscure".[104] Starting with the twentieth century, the website traces the ritual's chain of transmission backward through Israel Regardie (1908–1985), Eliphas Lévi (1810–1875), and the mythical Christian Rosenkreutz (fifteenth century) imagined by Johann Valentine Andreae (1586–1654). Aleister Crowley (1875-1948) must also be included in this list. Israel Regardie, one-time secretary to Crowley and chronicler of the Golden Dawn tradition, said about the pentagram ritual, "No other operations like it devolve from antiquity, although some form must necessarily have been used for banishing."[105]

It would appear, then, that the lesser ritual of the pentagram emerged in the nineteenth century, with its first written appearance in Lévi's work.[106] The more ancient connection to

[104] www.kheper.net/topics/Hermeticism/LBR.htm., note 4.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Eliphas Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, translated by A. E. Waite, New York: Samuel Weiser, 1972.

Rosenkreutz, legendary founder of the fifteenth century Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, becomes clearer with the knowledge that Lévi was the fifty-second Imperator of the Rosicrucian fraternity. William Wynn Westcott, one of the founders of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, succeeded Lévi in that office. We will now examine this history more closely.

Starting with Rosenkreutz and working forward, one can identify The Brotherhood of the Rose Cross (Rosenkreutz) as the imaginative product of another late sixteenth-early seventeenth-century German Protestant, theologian Johannes Valentinus Andreas.[107] The pentagram ritual does not appear in the foundational Rosicrucian texts *Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis*, or *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz in the year 1459*. Central to the formation of Protestant-derived Western Esoteric traditions, the myth of Christian Rosenkreutz retrojects a Christian esoteric into pre-Protestant time. Andreas's texts blend neoplatonism and alchemy with the Protestantized figure of the crucified redeemer Jesus Christ (Christian Rosenkreutz), who is imagined without discernable Jewish or Catholic elements. Like Thölde's "Basilius Valentinus," the attribution of the *Sefer Yetzirah* to the patriarch Abraham, or the *Zohar's* putative authorship by Talmudic Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, esoteric texts are frequently presented as ancient, attributed to past masters whose historic identity may be fictional like Basilius Valentinus or R. Shimon or mythological like Abraham.

Coming nearly two hundred years after Andreas, Eliphas Lévi describes two magical operations, the "Conjuration of the Four" and the "Blazing Pentagram," in his major work *Transcendental Magic*[108] which contain most of the material that will constitute the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram. *Transcendental Magic* covers in great detail and with charming style all aspects of magic that could be found in Renaissance-era magical and mystical texts, including parts of the *Zohar* available in Latin translation. Although Lévi is thought to have had some Hebrew, as well as Latin and Greek, as part of his ecclesiastic education, his translator A. E.

[107] Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 114.
[108] Eliphas Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, translated by A. E. Waite, New York: Samuel Weiser, 1972.

Waite said that, "it would be an error to suppose that any of his published works exhibit linguistic attainments, more especially in that language [Hebrew]."[109]

Eliphas Lévi is the Hebraicized pseudonym of French esotericist and magician Alphonse Louis Constant. Constant, a renegade *Abbé* and disappointed socialist, renounced Catholicism for magic sometime in the 1850s.[110] Working pseudonymously, Constant created Lévi, the fictional master, as an alternative identity. Gershom Scholem, not one generally given to great praise and certainly with an axe to grind in this particular case, characterized Lévi's use of Judaic qabalistic materials as "brilliant misunderstandings and misrepresentations."[111] It is in the intersection of Lévi's novel interpretations of qabalistic ideas and the theory of the four elements that we may locate the firm origins of the pentagram ritual.

The "Conjuration of the Four" allows the magician "to govern elementary spirits and thus become king of the occult elements" once she has successfully negotiated physical ordeals presented by each element.[112] These might include dangerous exposure to fire or "crossing an abyss by means of the trunk of a tree or a plank, scaling a perpendicular mountain during a storm, swimming through a dangerous whirlpool or cataract."[113] Mastery of the elements by gaining control of the Gnomes (earth), Undines (water), Salamanders (fire), and Sylphs (air) that govern them is the "indispensable preliminary of all magical operations."[114]

The "Conjuration" opens and closes with the magician describing the sign of the qabalistic cross—an ancient symbol representing "the oppositions and tetradic equilibrium of the elements"—upon his body while reciting the "occult versicle of the Lord's Prayer."[115] By marking the body with the sign of the cross, the magician deliberately remembers "the connection between human beings and God" which is "made concrete in terms of … what is said by the mouth, … what … physically surrounds the body."[116]

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[109] Ibid. xix.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York: Schocken, 1946, 2.
[112] *Transcendental Magic*, 229.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid. 234.
[116] Barbara Black Koltuv, *Amulets, Talismans, and Magical Jewelry: A Way to the Unseen, Everpresent, Almighty God*, Berwick, ME: Nicholas Hays, 2005, 7.

The "occult versicle" that accompanies the ritual gesture of the cross is based on the concluding phrase of Matthew 6:13 in the version preserved in Greek by the Eastern Orthodox Church, "for the kingdom (*basileia*) and the power (*dynamis*) and the glory (*doxa*) are yours for ever (*aeonas*). Amen." The next part of this discussion will explore the genealogy of this highly significant phrase, which, in its repetition, creates the ritual frame.

Matthew 6:13 may have been truly occult from Lévi, as it does not appear in the Vulgate (Latin) Gospel of Matthew (or Luke) from which the Roman Catholic version of the Lord's Prayer is taken. William Tyndale, translating the Bible into English from Hebrew and Greek sources in the sixteenth century, preserved the verse for the Anglican Church. Known as the doxology after the Greek word *doxa*, glory, this verse concludes the Lord's Prayer in the Anglican Common Book of Prayer and the later King James Bible (1611) as well as the earlier Tyndale Bible, which renders it as, "for Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory, for ever. Amen." The doxology does not become part of the Roman Catholic Rite until 1969. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus makes intertextual reference to 1 Chronicles 29:11 a text that would have been familiar to Lévi who would have encountered it in the *Zohar* where it is a favorite recurring speculative leitmotif, as well as in the Old Testament.[117] This intertextual connection will be explored in more detail below.

As is the practice among esotericists, Lévi presents the "Conjuration" as an ancient ritual, which he claims was originally conducted and transmitted in two versions, although he provides only one, intended for priests and initiates.

> For example, the initiate said raising his right hand to his forehead, 'For thine,' then added 'is,' and continuing as he brought down his hand to his breast, 'the kingdom,' then to the left shoulder, 'the justice,' afterwards to the right shoulder 'and the mercy'—then clasping his hands, he added, 'in the generating ages.' *Tibi sunt Malkuth et Geburah et Chesed per aeonas*—a Sign of the Cross which is absolutely and magnificently kabalistic, which the profanations of Gnosticism have lost completely to the official and militant Church.[118]

[117] Moses de Leon, *The Zohar*, translated and annotated by Daniel Matt, Pritzker: Chicago, Volume III, 540.
[118] Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, 239.

Here, Lévi renders Matthew's occult versicle as the magical phrase, "*tibi sunt Malkuth et Geburah et Chesed per aeonas*." Despite its garbled Latin, Hebrew, and Greek vocabulary, the phrase is neither Latin nor Hebrew nor Greek, but a magical incantation composed of words of power, that are intended to communicate their energetic or generative power rather than intelligible semantic content.[119] The Hebrew words *malkuth* (kingdom), *geburah* (power), and *chesed* (mercy) are three of the ten *sefirot* or divine emanations of the qabalistic Tree of Life. Lévi's Latin *tibi sunt* (yours are) and *per aeonas* (through the generating ages) are schoolboy Latin and Greek, respectively, and not the classical languages of Cicero and St. Jerome, or the koine Greek of the author of Matthew.[120] This becomes clear when Lévi's incantation is compared with the Hebrew 1 Chronicles 29:11, St. Jerome's translation of that verse, or the Greek Matthew 6:13. The key words are highlighted in bold in each language below.

Hebrew 1 Chronicles 29:11	*L'cha, Adonai, ha-**gedulah**, v'ha-**gevurah**, v'ha-**tiferet**, v'ha-**netzach**, v'ha-**hod**, **ki kol ba'shamayim u'va-aretz**, l'cha, Adonai, ha-**mamlacha**, v'ha-mitnaseh l'khol l'rosh.*
Greek NT	*Hoti sou estin he **basileia** kai he **dynamis** kai he **doxa** eis tous **aeonas**. Amen.* Matthew 6:13
Latin (Vulgate) (St. Jerome)	*Tua est, Domine, **magnificentia**, et **potentia**, et **gloria**, atque **victoria**: et tibi **laus**: **cuncta enim quae in caelo sunt et in terra** tua sunt: tuum Domine, **regnum**, et tu es super omnes principes.*[121]1 Chronicles 29:11
English (Tyndale)	*For Thine is the **Kingdom** and the **Power** and the **Glory** for **ever**. Amen.* Matthew 6:13
Lévi	*Tibi sunt **Malkuth** et **Geburah** et **Chesed** per **aeonas**. Amen*.

St. Jerome's *tua est* (yours is) is the proper construction of Lévi's *tibi sunt* from which it differs in case (nominative, not dative) and number of the verb (singular, not plural), and use of the pronoun you, *tu* (in its dative form *tibi*), instead of the adjective *tua* (yours). *Tua* modifies

[119] Rachel Elior,

[120] Lévi's Latin brings to mind the scene in *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, where Roman Centurion John Cleese corrects Palestine Liberationist Eric Idle's, *Romanes eunt domus* (Romans go home) to *Romani, ite domum*!

[121] 1 Chronicles 29:11.

the singular, feminine nouns *magnificentia*, *potentia*, *gloria*, and *victoria*. Lévi's phrase *per aeonas* (for ever) appears to be a Greek-Latin mash-up.

As for the Hebrew, 1 Chronicles 29:11 lists seven divine qualities or attributes which the later qabalists will reinterpret as the lower seven *sefirot* on the Tree of Life, namely mercy, power, glory, victory, splendor, the blueprint of creation, and kingship. Lévi, whose Christian readers will understand the reference to Matthew, may miss the reference to Chronicles, which provides the context for the ritual power of the words. 1 Chronicles 29:10-11 is the prayer that King David offers to God as he announces the construction of the Jerusalem temple to the Israelites. In Matthew, in a textual move meaningful to early Christians familiar with the Hebrew scriptures, David's words are truncated and put into Jesus' mouth. In this way, Jesus' messianic status is affirmed through his correspondence to King David, and his magical prowess is suggested through the list of powers attributed to the Hebrew God.

Interpreted in a Christological frame, the *Zohar* could point to both Hebrew and Christian scriptures. The versicle clearly establishes Jesus as both magician and messiah who can bring about and stand for the Jerusalem temple. Lévi has it both ways, then, as Jesus becomes not only the foundation of the Christian church but also, for Lévi, of the occult church. This has important implications for the European esoteric and the verse's centrality in the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram. It is evident that Lévi comes to the doxology by way of the *Zohar,* as the language of the three qualities/*sefirot* of his qabalistic cross—kingdom (*malkhut*), power (*geburah*), and mercy (*chesed*)—reflect Zoharic origin and not Chronicles (which uses *mamlacha* instead of *malkhut* and *gedulah* instead of *chesed*).

The "Conjuration" and "Blazing Pentagram" rituals were passed to The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, founded in London in 1887 by William Wynn Westcott (1848-1928), William Robert Woodman (1828-1891), and Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers (1854-1918), who were, like Lévi, Rosicrucians. The Order of the Golden Dawn is responsible for developing the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram into the ritual that we are familiar with. As Golden Dawn rituals and ceremonies were believed to be the creative work of Secret Chiefs, spiritual masters who magically communicated with these three men, it is probably safe to assume that the

Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram was scribed by one or another or all of them.[122] Westcott, Woodman, and Mathers, furthermore, were Freemasons, whose mythology centers the construction of the Jerusalem temple and the assassination of master mason Hiram.[123]

Of the three, Mathers was a virtuosic and creative ritualist, translator, and autodidact scholar of the esoteric whose poverty and removal to Paris from London in 1891 created tensions within the Order that resulted in his expulsion in 1900 and the subsequent schism of the Golden Dawn. With his wife, Moina Mathers (sister of the philosopher Henri Bergson), and the financial assistance of theosophist Anna Kingsford, Mathers created his own magical order, the Alpha et Omega, and its Ahathoor Temple, which his widow continued into the 1930s. Whether the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram was written by Mathers or not, it was part of the Golden Dawn's ritual repertoire from the beginning; Aleister Crowely, for example, received it upon his Neophyte initiation in 1888.[124]

Israel Regardie (1907-1985), like Crowley before him, acquired the pentagram ritual upon his 1934 Neophyte initiation into the Golden Dawn's successor organization, the Stella Matutina.[125] A Rosicrucian and magical adept, Regardie had also worked as personal secretary to Crowley in 1928, by which time Crowley's own magical system of Thelema was well developed and in regular practice. It seems certain that by the time Regardie compiled and published all of the rituals, ceremonies, and grades of the second-generation Stella Matutina, he was already familiar with Crowley's version of the pentagram ritual as well.

Having taken Mathers' side in the Golden Dawn schism, Crowley broke with the Golden Dawn in 1900.[126] He continued to use the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram (as well as techniques from many varied sources) incorporating it into Thelema as a foundational tool for any serious magical aspirant. In a typically hyperbolic pronouncement, he said, "Those who regard this

[122] Henrik Bogdan, *Western Esotericism and Rituals of Initiation*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007,
[123] Freemason reference
[124] Aleister Crowley, *Confessions*,
[125] Bogdan, *Western Esotericism*, history of ritual
[126] Aleister Crowley, Confessions real hagiography, the other fictional accounts

ritual as a mere device to invoke or banish spirits, are unworthy to possess it. Properly understood, it is the Medicine of Metals and the Stone of the Wise."[127]

Certainly, Crowley here is indulging in a bit of polemic against the Golden Dawn, which tended to play down the possibilities open to the Neophyte master of the elements. Contrast Crowley's attitude with Regardie's, who transmits normative Golden Dawn doctrine, "The Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram is only of use in general and unimportant invocations. Its use is permitted to the outer [order] that Neophytes may have protection against opposing forces, and also that they may form some idea of how to attract and to come into communication with spiritual and invisible things."[128] It would seem that once the initiate has progressed from the outer to the inner order of the Golden Dawn, the ritual's occult power is revealed, whereas in Crowley's Thelema system the neophyte is made aware from the start of the ritual's enormous potential so that it may be consciously performed with proper awe and respectful reverence. Having concluded our mythological history will now turn our attention to the ritual itself before proceeding to its historical mythology.

Briefly described, the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram is a four-part operation that banishes or invokes elemental spirits (earth, water, fire, air) to create sacred ritual space. The qabalistic cross, discussed above, comprises the first and fourth parts of the ritual. It inscribes the sefirotic Tree of Life upon the body of the magician, establishing a bidirectional energetic current emanating from the uppermost sefirah, *Keter* (Crown), to the lowest sefirah, *Malchut* (Kingdom), and back again.

Having established the current with the qabalistic cross, the magician now draws four pentagrams in the air with a wand or other suitable weapon, one in each of the cardinal directions. According to Lévi, the pentagram is a powerful and ancient "sign of intellectual omnipotency and autocracy" and represents the Zoharic Microposopus or the small face of God, also known as the lower seven sefirot.[129] The pentagrams may be drawn either to banish

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[127] Aleister Crowley with Mary Desti and Leila Waddell, *Magic Book 4, Parts I-IV*, edited, annotated, and introduced by Hymenaeus Beta, York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1994, 692.
[128] Israel Regardie, "Book Four," *The Golden Dawn*, St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1982, 11.
[129] Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, Chapter V

or invoke, although the banishment of earth is particularly recommended for its general protective power.[130] As each pentagram is drawn, beginning in the east and proceeding deosil, it is charged with a divine name. The circle is closed upon return to the east.

In part three, the magician calls the four archangels responsible for the elemental domains to their respective stations. At this point, the four elementals merge with the enthused ritualist to produce quintessence, the spiritual substance of the "six-rayed star," in the column, that is, the space occupied by the magician. Part four repeats the qabalistic cross and concludes the ritual.

The ritual according to Aleister Crowley is now given, followed by that of the Golden Dawn. Parts one and four correspond to steps i–v, part two to steps vi–ix, and part three to x–xvi.

i. Touching the forehead say Ateh (Unto Thee),
ii. Touching the breast say Malchut (the Kingdom)
iii. Touching the right shoulder say ve-geburah (and the Power)
iv. Touching the left shoulder say ve-gedulah (and the Glory)
v. Clasping the hands upon the breast say le-Olahm, Amen (To the Ages, Amen).
vi. Turning to the East, make a pentagram (that of Earth) with the proper weapon (usually the Wand). Say (i.e., vibrate) IHVH
vii. Turning to the South, the same, but say A D N I
viii. Turning to the West, the same, but say A H I H
ix. Turning to the North, the same, but say A G L A (Pronounce: Ye-ho-wau, Adonai, Eheieh, Agla).
x. Extending the arms in the form of a cross say,
xi. Before me Raphael;
xii. Behind me Gabriel;
xiii. On my right hand, Michael;
xiv. On my left hand, Auriel;
xv. For about me flames the Pentagram,

[130] Crowley, 690.

xvi. And in the Column stands the six-rayed Star.

xvii–xxi. Repeat (i) to (v), the Qabalistic Cross. [131]

Crowley's pentagram ritual, like the Golden Dawn version preserved by Israel Regardie below, is an elaborated version of Lévi's Conjuration of the Four. Lévi's Hebrew/Latin/Greek mash-up of the doxology has been replaced with a similarly uninformed knowledge of Hebrew that does, however, attempt to communicate the information properly, as shown by the English translations provided in parentheses. The Golden Dawn gentlemen as well as Crowley must have been familiar with the Lord's Prayer from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and the King James Version of the Book of Matthew.

But the use of Hebrew here deliberately points past Christianity to the Old Testament source of the occult versicle and the story of Davidic prayer and blessing, 1 Chronicles 29:11 or to its Zoharic presence. The drawn pentagrams charged with four-letter Hebrew divine names, and the summoning of the archangels all throw into relief the Judaic elements obscured by Lévi's use of Latin and Greek and the sign of the cross, naturally anathema to Jews, Lévi's protestations of the cross's universal and Gnostic symbolism notwithstanding. In points to be returned to later, both the Thelemic and Golden Dawn qabalistic crosses associate *gevurah* with the right side of the body, *gedulah* with the left side, and *malchut* with the center at heart level. The angelic array is based on a Christian kabbalistic correspondence of angels, elements, and cardinal direction.

The pentagram stands for the four elements earth, water, air, and fire animated by the fifth, quintessential, element, "Eternal Spirit."[132] The six-rayed star in the middle of the four pentagrams represents this animating spiritual substance. The four letters of the Tetragrammaton, the ineffable Name of the Hebrew deity, *Yod Hey Vav Hey*, also represent the material elements of creation in the pentagram. In the Golden Dawn system, the letter *Shin* represents the quintessence, the Spirit or Wind of Elohim, *Ruach Elohim*, that divine aspect which hovered over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2) in the moment just before creation.

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[131] Aleister Crowley, *Magic in Theory and Practice*, New York: Dover Press, 1976, 379. It is part IV of *Liber O vel Manus et Sagittae*, *sub figura VI*.

[132] Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1982, Book Four, 9.

This is demonstrated magically by the system of kabbalistic gematria, the practice of discovering the numerical equivalence of seemingly disparate words or phrases in order to reveal hidden interpretive possibility. In Hebrew gematria the letter *shin* (300) is numerically equivalent to the phrase *Ruach Elohim* (214+86). Furthermore, the *shin*, descending between the masculine divine *YaH* and the feminine divine *VaH*, transforms the divine parents into their divine progeny. In other words, *YeHoVaH* becomes *YeHeShUaH* (Jesus), a movement that incidentally reveals a layer of Christian supersessionist ideology beneath the surface of the European occult.[133] Alternatively, the *shin* can place itself between the first three letters and final Hey ("ruling earth"), yielding *YeHoVaSHaH*. "From each re-entering angle of the Pentagram, therefore, issueth a ray representing a radiation from the Divine therefore it is called the flaming Pentagram, or Star of Great Light, in affirmation of the forces of Divine Light to be found therein."[134]

The Golden Dawn Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram as transmitted through the Stella Matutina follows below.

Take a steel dagger in the right hand. Face East.

Touch thy forehead and say ATEH (thou art).

Touch thy breast and say MALKUTH (the Kingdom)

Touch thy right shoulder and say VE-GEBURAH (and the Power)

Touch thy left shoulder and say VE-GEDULAH (and the Glory)

Clasp thy hands before thee and say LE-OLAM (for ever).

Dagger between fingers, point up and say AMEN.[135]

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[133] Israel Regardie, "Book Four" in *The Golden Dawn*, St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1982, 9. It is typical that Regardie, a Jewish man and otherwise meticulous in all aspects of magical practice, was not educated enough in Judaism to know that the correct spelling of *Yeheshua* would need an *'ayin* (as well as the *shin*) in order to mean "Savior." In this, Regardie recapitulates Lévi's fetishistic and appropriative use of Hebrew as a magical language.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid., Volume 1, 106-107.

Make in the Air toward the East the invoking pentagram as shown[136] and bringing the point of the dagger to the centre of the Pentagram, vibrate the Deity Name Yod He Vau He—imagining that your voice carries forward to the East of the Universe.

Holding the dagger out before you, go to the South, make the Pentagram and vibrate similarly the deity name Adonai.

Go to the West, make the pentagram and vibrate Eheieh.

Go to the North, make the Pentagram and vibrate Agla.

Return to the East and complete your circle by bringing the dagger point to the centre of the first Pentagram.

Stand with arms outstretched in the form of a cross and say.—

Before Me: Raphael

Behind Me: Gabriel

At my right Hand: Michael

At my left hand: Auriel

Before me flames the Pentagram—

Behind me shines the six-rayed star.

Again make the Qabalistic Cross as directed above, saying Ateh, etc.

This Golden Dawn Version varies slightly from the Thelemic, mainly in that the flaming pentagram is imagined as before the ritualist and the six-rayed star behind in the former, whereas in the latter, the ritualist is imagined as standing in the center column of the pentagram, receiving the influx of the six-rayed star. The Golden Dawn specifies use of a steel dagger where the Thelemic ritual is more flexible, suggesting "the proper weapon (usually the Wand)."[137]

[136] The invoking pentagram of earth begins at the top of the pentagram, first making the bottom left point, the upper right point, upper left point, lower right point and finishing at the top. The banishing ritual begins drawing the pentagram from the lower left point to the top, lower right, upper left, upper right and concluding at the lower left. Ibid. 107.

[137] Crowley, *Magic in Theory and Practice*, 379.

This section concludes with the Rectified Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram, based on the Thelemic Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram. Among other changes, the Rectified Ritual restructures the qabalistic cross to align with the tenth and eleventh verses of 1 Chronicles 29 and to include all of the lower seven sefirot. The reversal of the right and left sides of the tree of life on the body, the rearrangement of the angels in their quarters, and the use of divine names will be discussed in the following section, where the discussion of the Chronicles material will also be revisited.

i. Touching the forehead say L'cha[138] (Yours [are]),
ii. Touching the right shoulder say Ha-gedulah (the magnificence)
iii. Touching the left shoulder say V'ha-gevurah (and the power)
iv. Touching the breast say V'ha-tiferet (and the harmony)
v. Touching the right hip say V'ha-netzach (and the victory)
vi. Touching the left hip say V'ha'hod (and the beauty)
vii. Touching the generative organ say Ki kol ba'sha'mayim u'va'aretz (for all in the heavens and on the earth [are yours])
viii. Touching the ground say L'cha ha-mamlacha (Yours is the kingdom)
ix. Raising the hands to the breast say,
x. V'ha'mit'na'seh l'chol l'rosh (and you are exalted to the head of all [things])
xi. Clasping the hands upon the breast say Me'olam v'ad olam, Amen (from infinity to infinity, amen[139])
xii. East: earth pentagram, Yod Hey Vav Hey (*may be vibrated as individual letters Yod, Hey, Vav, Hey, or as consonants followed by the open breath: Yah, Vah, Hah, Vah, or vocalized as two syllables in a complete breath: inhale Yah, exhale Vah*)
xiii. South: same, Adonai
xiv. West: same, Eh'he'yeh
xv. North: same, Ah Ga La Ah—Atah Gibor L'olam Adonai (*You are infinitely strong, Adonai*)

[138] Pronunciation guide: /ch/ is a guttural fricative, stress generally falls on the ultimate syllable
[139] Amen means "faithful" and is also an acronym of El Melech Ne'eman (El is a faithful—in the sense of enduring or everlasting—king). It is also the same string of consonants as Crowley's Aughmn in the Gnostic mass. BDB

xvi. Extending the arms in the form of a cross say,

xvii. Before me Gavriel;

xviii. Behind me Raphael;

xix. On my right hand, Michael;

xx. On my left hand, Uriel; [140]

xxi. For about me flames the Pentagram,

xxii. And in the Column stands the six-rayed Star, Shechinat El.

xxiii–xxxiii. Repeat (i) to (xi), the Qabalistic Cross.

Historical Mythology of the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram

The Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram contains powerful Judaic mythological source material including the qabalistic *sefirot* or emanations of divine quality—the small face of God, reference to the inauguration of the construction of the Solomonic (First) Temple in Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 29:10-11), four four-letter Hebrew divine names, and an angelic array that suggests the seventy-two-letter name of god and recalls the desert tabernacle in Exodus 35-40. As is typical with Judaic ritual products, this material spans the range of Judaic texts from early strata of the Bible to sixteenth-century Lurianic qabalah. As is also typical of Judaic ritual, the material incorporates and Judaifies ideas and practices from many cultures over time to create a unique and heady epistemological brew.[141]

The Hebrew language of the pentagram ritual has been garbled in the course of its appropriation into the Western Esoteric through predominantly Christian pathways; rendered nonsensical in its detachment from its textual culture and fetishized as a magical language that contains special words of power.[142] But the magical, creative power of words is foundational to Judaic thought and despite its detachment from its cultural moorings, the magic of the language is preserved in the new form and moves effectively through the spell, ritual, and practitioner.

Without necessarily maintaining its faith in the efficacy of magic, modern Judaic culture also preserves a sense of the power of these particular names and phrases as they have all been

[140] Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar (Numbers Rabbah) 2:10.
[141] Marla Segol, *Zohar*
[142] Koltuv, quoting Rachel Elior, *Amulets*,

part of magical and non-magical Jewish practice for centuries, even millennia. Each of the segments of the Rectified Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram are discussed in turn below, beginning with the qabalistic cross, next the inscribed pentagrams, and concluding with the angelic array.

As mentioned above, two verses in the last chapter of 1 Chronicles provide the underlying text for the language of the qabalistic cross that opens and closes the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram. In 1 Chronicles 29, an aged but still vigorous King David has passed the kingship to his son Solomon and entrusted him with the building of the deity's temple. The tribes and clans have contributed to the capital campaign. Amid much rejoicing, "David blessed the Lord in front of all the assemblage; David said, 'Blessed are you, Lord, God of Israel our father, from eternity to eternity. Yours, Lord, are greatness, might, splendor, triumph, and majesty—yes, all that is in heaven and on earth; to You, Lord, belong kingship and preeminence above all.'"[143]

Verse ten contains the phrase "from eternity to eternity" (*me'olam v'ad olam*); verse eleven lists seven divine qualities or attributes which later Judaic mystics will associate with the lower seven *sefirot* namely, greatness (*gedulah*), might (*gevurah*), splendor (*tiferet*), triumph (*netzach*), and majesty (*hod*), the creation of heaven and earth (*kol ba'shamayim u'va-aretz*), and kingship (*mamlacha*). Modern Christian readers may hear in this language echoes of the Lord's Prayer without being aware of the gospel Matthew's intertextual reference to Chronicles and the construction of the Jerusalem temple.[144]

In Matthew 6:9, Jesus instructs his followers, "Pray then in this way." The Greek Matthew (but not the Vulgate) concludes the prayer in 6:13 "for the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours forever. Amen."[145] The reference to Chronicles may have been clearer to Matthew's community, in particular, and the early Christians generally, as it links Jesus and the new Christian church to King David and the establishment of the Jerusalem temple. The prayer

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[143] 1 Chronicles 29:10-11, The Writings: Kethubim, A new translation of The Holy Scriptures according to the traditional Hebrew text, New York: Jewish Publication Society

[144] Idelsohn, A. Z., *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development*, New York: Henry Holt, 1932, 308. Dover Reprint edition, 1995.

[145] Aaron M. Gale, "Introduction and Annotations to Matthew," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation*, edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 13.

Jesus models for his followers promises the kingdom of heaven on earth, when people treat each other with divine favor. The occult versicle refers to the establishment of the Jerusalem temple as God's kingdom on earth.

In remembering the foundation of the first temple, with its own intertextual relationship to Exodus 35-40 desert tabernacle narrative associated with liberation and redemption, Judaic communities in Christian diaspora could reimagine and recreate that temple collectively in their respective times and places every day. Inserted twice into the liturgy of the morning worship (*tefilat shacharit*, literally, dawn prayers), 1 Chronicles 29:11 articulated hope for a messianic time without actually hoping for a messiah. 1 Chronicles 29:10–13 occurs in the early part of *shacharit* immediately following the building crescendo recitation of Psalms 100 and 145–150. It is followed by Nehemiah 9:6–15, relating the national history from a second-temple perspective, and excerpts from the story of the Exodus from Egypt and the miracle of the parting of the sea.[146] The segment concludes with the half-*kaddish* that marks the separation between the preliminary verses of song and the *Shema* and her blessings.[147]

By the time 1 Chronicles 10-13 is recited in the *tefilat shacharit*, much of the work of imaginary construction of the temple has already been done. *Birkhot ha-shachar* (dawn blessings) precede *tefilat shacharit* (prayers of dawn) and were presumably recited by the most devoted and earliest-rising practitioners. The *birkhot ha-shachar* vividly describes the temple service with quotes from the Torah, Mishnah, and Babylonian Talmud.[148] The section itself concludes with a prayer for the ultimate construction and dedication of the Jerusalem taken from Mishnah Avot 5:23 and Malachi 3:4, "May it be thy will, Lord our God and God of our fathers, that the Temple be speedily rebuilt in our days; and grant us a portion in thy Torah. There we will serve thee with reverence, as in the days of old and as in former years."[149]

In addition to its daily recitation in the *tefilat shacharit*, 1 Chronicles 29:11 is recited audibly and communally three times a week during the Torah reading service (*kri'at ha-Torah*).

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[146] Philip Birnbaum, *Ha-Siddur Ha-Shalem: The Complete Siddur*, New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1949, 66-70. In Birnbaum, the English is on even-numbered pages, Hebrew on the odd.
[147] Ibid., 70.
[148] Ibid., 28-42
[149] Ibid., 46.

As the Torah is taken from the ark and rests against the service leader's heart, he and the congregation responsively chant Deuteronomy 6:4, the *Shema*, declaring God's oneness and an additional phrase of unattributed origin affirming God's oneness, magnitude, and the holiness of his Name. The service leader next invites the congregation to praise with the rabbincally-prescribed language of Psalm 34:4, "Exalt the Lord with me; let us extol His Name together."[150] The congregation responds, "Yours, Lord, are the *gedulah*, and the *gevurah*, and the *tiferet*, and the *netzach* and the *hod*, and indeed, all that is in heaven and on earth are yours, Lord, also the *mamlacha*, and you preeminent above all else."

The insertion of 1 Chronicles 29:11 into synagogue liturgy was an innovation of the mid-thirteenth century Rhine Valley *Hasidei Ashkenaz* community.[151] A manuscript dated 1238 and housed at the Vatican contains a marginal note instructing the congregation to whisper this verse while the service leader chants the six words of Psalm 34:4.[152] While the custom of whispering the response seems to have been at first limited to the Northern European communities, it became popular in the fifteenth century and widespread by the sixteenth.[153] There are over one hundred pre-sixteenth century liturgical manuscripts that record this addition.[154] In most congregations today, irrespective of denominational affiliation, this verse is sung as the service leader processes the Torah around the synagogue. During this procession, congregants touch or kiss the Torah with their prayerbooks or the fringes (*tzitzit*) of their prayer shawls (*tallitot*).

The Rhine Valley Ashkenaz Hasidim (eleventh-thirteenth centuries) believed that mindful attention to the minutest details of liturgical prayer could bring about communication with divine sefirotic emanations—a mystic tradition "with roots that can be traced back at least to [ninth century] Saadia Gaon"—"known in the different traditions as The Glory (the most

[150] Ruth Langer, "Sinai, Zion, and God in the Synagogue: Celebrating Torah in Ashkenaz," Chapter X in *Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue: Studies in the History of Jewish Prayer*, edited by Ruth Langer and Steven Fine, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005, 121-160, 142.
[151] Ibid., 138.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid. 137.
[154] Ibid. 138.

common term), Greatness, Kingdom, Cherub, etc."[155] According to Ruth Langer, the Hasidim believed that the liturgy had been "deliberately developed so that every so that its every nuance, including the order and number of its words and letters, would participate in the Divine harmony of which this emanation, along with the written Torah and creation itself, was but a part."[156]

Tefilat shacharit is the longest and most involved of the three daily prayer liturgies. Originally developed by the Talmudic rabbis and embellished over the centuries, the morning service builds slowly through a series of blessings, petitions, recitations of Psalms and passages of Talmud to the *Shema*, the declaration of divine oneness and love, and the silent communion of the variously called Eighteen Benedictions (*Shemoneh Esrei*) or standing prayer (*Amidah*) or, simply, prayer (*Tefilah*). The Torah service comes at the moment in liturgy when the individual in community stands in the closest proximity to God, open to receive any emanation as the scroll of Torah is opened and unrolled, word revealed. In this divinely intimate moment, a communal expression of longing could be given vibration and voice.

The qabalists of thirteenth-century Southern France, Spain, and Italy were also aware of the theosophical, not to say theurgic, power of 1 Chronicles 29:11. It is a "frequently cited verse" in the Zoharic literature, where it is used to epitomize the master who is capable of traversing the distance between heaven and earth.[157] "A righteous person such as Elijah," says Daniel Matt, "links the divine and earthly realms. Thereby, he obtains the rung of *Yesod* and unites the divine couple *Tiferet* and *Shekhinah*, who are symbolized as heaven and earth. Such a human channels the divine flow and is capable of wonders."[158]

Furthermore, in Zoharic literature of "*Ra'aya Meheimna* and *Tikkunei ha-Zohar*, the phrase 'who grasps heaven and earth' is presented as a Targumic [Aramaic translation of the Torah] rendering of 1 Chronicles 29:11: *for all that is in heaven and earth*. The standard Targum on the verse reads differenty." [159] When one reads the list of attributes with this Zoharic frame,

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[155] Ruth Langer, *To Worship God Properly: Tensions between Liturgical Custom and Halakha in Judaism*, Cincinnati: Hebrew Unon College Press, 1998, 38.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Daniel Matt, The Zohar, Pritzker Edition Volume III, 171.
[158] Ibid, note 540.
[159] Ibid.

the text now produces all seven of the lower *sefirot*, "yours, YHVH, is the *gedulah*, and the *gevurah*, and the *tiferet*, and the *netzach*, and the *hod* and the *yesod* are yours, YHVH, also the *malchut* (which is also *Shekhinah*). In this way, the lower emanations descend from one unitary source YHVH. The *tzaddik* (upright man), acting as the phallic *sefirah yesod*, connects heaven and earth. As the emanation of *yesod*, the *tzaddik* channels and delivers divine flow to the lowest *sefirah*, *malchut*, thus stimulating generative and procreative activity in the material world where the *Shekhinah* is in exile with her people Israel and the Torah.

Such is the context of the language of the qabalistic cross. By reciting this formula, the Golden Dawn, Thelemic, or Wiccan practitioner draws on deep Judaic and pre-Judaic roots, metaphors, and images. In effect, the modern magician's utterance constructs an imaginary temple around her. She becomes a tzaddik who channels the divine flow which descends and becomes a living presence within it, not unlike the ancient practitioners who, like Abraham, "gazed, looked, saw, delved, understood, engraved, carved, permuted, depicted" and were "successful."[160]

Upon completion of the qabalistic cross, which the magician inscribes upon his body, he then inscribes pentagrams in each of the four cardinal directions, beginning in the east and proceeding clockwise. Each of the pentagrams is charged with the vibration of a four-letter divine name: YHVH in the east, ADNI in the south, AHYH in the west, and AGLA in the north. The elements of the divinely-charged pentagrams have their roots in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the Scroll of Formation. This ancient magical and astrological text gives instructions for creating a *golem*, a living being, out of clay and divine names.

The *Sefer Yetzirah* describes the Ten *Sefirot* of Nothingness (*bli'mah,* "without what") as follows, "These are the Ten *Sefirot* of Nothingness. One is the Breath of the Living God, Breath (from Breath), Water (from Breath), Fire [from Water, and the extremities], up, down, east, west, north, and south."[161]

In this imagination, the divine Breath gives life to voice, breath, and speech. Divine breath yields a breath which engraves and carves the original twenty-two letters of the Hebrew

[160] Aryeh Kaplan, *Sefer Yetzirah, The Book of Creation*, York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1993, 267.
[161] Ibid. 262.

alphabet. The twenty-two letters are grouped as three Mothers (*alef, mem*, and *shin*), seven Doubles—having two sounds—(*bet, gimel, dalet, kaf, peh, resh, taf*) and twelve Simple, i.e., single-sounded letters (*he, vav, zayin, chet, tet, yod, lamed, nun, samech, 'ayin, tzaddi, quf*). In the next condensation, breath produces water. The magician is directed to use the water to "engrave and carve chaos and void, mire and clay." Water produces fire that can be used to engrave and carve the Divine Chariot, with its holy beings (*chayot kodesh*), the fiery *Seraphim* and wheel-like *Ofanim*, and the Ministering Angels (*malachei ha-sharet*). Thus from air (*alef*), water (*mem*), and fire (*shin*) is the holy dwelling established in "chaos and void, mire and clay" that is, in the inanimate man. The prooftext, "He makes his angels of breaths, His ministers of flaming fire" (Psalms 104:4). Finally, the magician "seals" each of the six directions with a divine name that is a specific permutation and combination of three of the simple letters with the three letters of the Tetragrammaton, YHV (*yod, he, vav*). [162] Thus is lifeless matter transformed into the holy dwelling of vital divine presence.

[162] Ibid., 261-262.

Liber II: The Message of the Master Therion

Frater ΤΟ ΜΕΓΑ ΘΗΡΙΟΝ

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."[163]

"There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt."[164]

"The word of the Law is Θελημα."[165]

Θελημα—Thelema—means Will.

The Key to this Message is this word—Will. The first obvious meaning of this Law is confirmed by antithesis; "The word of Sin is Restriction."[166]

Again: "thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect."[167]

Take this carefully; it seems to imply a theory that if every man and every woman did his or her will—the true will—there would be no clashing. "Every man and every woman is a star,"[168] and each star moves in an appointed path without interference. There is plenty of room for all; it is only disorder that creates confusion.

From these considerations it should be clear that "Do what thou wilt" does not mean "Do what you like." It is the apotheosis of Freedom; but it is also the strictest possible bond.

Do what thou wilt—then do nothing else. Let nothing deflect thee from that austere and holy task. Liberty is absolute to do thy will; but seek to do any other thing whatever, and instantly obstacles must arise. Every act that is not in definite course of that one orbit is erratic, an hinderance. Will must not be two, but one.

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[163] *AL* I: 40
[164] *AL* III: 60
[165] *AL* I: 39
[166] *AL* I: 41
[167] *AL* I: 42-44
[168] *AL* I: 3

Note further that this will is not only to be pure, that is, single, as explained above, but also "unassuaged of purpose." This strange phrase must give us pause. It may mean that any purpose in the will would damp it; clearly the "lust of result" is a thing from which it must be delivered.

But the phrase may also be interpreted as if it read "with purpose unassuaged"—i.e., with tireless energy. The conception is, therefore, of an eternal motion, infinite and unalterable. It is Nirvana, only dynamic instead of static—and this comes to the same thing in the end.

The obvious practical task of the magician is then to discover what his will really is, so that he may do it in this manner, and he can best accomplish this by the practices of *Liber Thisarb* (see *Equinox* I. VII. 105) or such others as may from one time to another be appointed.

Thou must (1) Find out what is thy Will. (2) Do that Will with *(a)* one-pointedness, *(b)* detachment, *(c)* peace.

Then, and then only, art thou in harmony with the Movement of Things, thy will part of, and therefore equal to, the Will of God. And since the will is but the dynamic aspect of the self, and since two different selves could not possess identical wills; then, if thy will be God's will, *Thou art That*.

There is but one other word to explain. Elsewhere it is written—surely for our great comfort—"Love is the law, love under will."[169]

This is to be taken as meaning that while Will is the Law, the nature of that Will is Love. But this Love is as it were a by-product of that Will; it does not contradict or supersede that Will; and if apparent contradiction should arise in any crisis, it is the Will that will guide us aright. Lo, while in *The Book of the Law* is much of Love, there is no word of Sentimentality. Hate itself is almost like Love! "As brothers fight ye!"[170] All the manly races of the world understand this. The Love of *Liber Legis* is always bold, virile, even orgiastic. There is delicacy, but it is the delicacy of strength. Mighty and terrible and glorious as it is, however, it is but the

[169] *AL* I: 57
[170] *AL* III: 59

pennon upon the sacred lance of Will, the damascened inscription upon the swords of the Knight-monks of Thelema.

Duty

A Note on the Chief Rules of Practical Conduct to be Observed

By Those Who Accept the Law of Thelema

Frater TO MEΓA ΘHPION

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."[171]

"There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt."[172]

"… thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect."[173]

"Love is the law, love under will."[174]

"Every man and every woman is a star."[175]

A. Your Duty to Yourself

1. Find yourself to be the centre of your own Universe.

"I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star."[176]

2. Explore the Nature and Powers of your own Being.

This includes everything which is, or can be for you; and you must accept everything exactly as it is in itself, as one of the factors which go to make up your True Self. This True Self thus ultimately includes all things soever; its discovery is Initiation (the traveling inwards) and as

[171] *AL* I: 40
[172] *AL* III: 60
[173] *AL* I: 42-44
[174] *AL* I: 57
[175] *AL* I: 3
[176] *AL* II: 6

its Nature is to move continually, it must be understood not as static, but as dynamic, not as Noun but as Verb.

3. Develop in due harmony and proportion every faculty which you possess.

"Wisdom says: be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy. Be not animal; refine thy rapture! If thou drink, drink by the eight and ninety rules of art: if thou love, exceed by delicacy; and if thou do aught joyous, let there be subtlety therein! But exceed! exceed!"[177]

"Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this."[178]

4. Contemplate your own Nature.

Consider every element thereof both separately and in relation to all the rest as to judge accurately the true purpose of the totality of your Being.

5. Find the formula of this purpose, or "True Will," in an expression as simple as possible.

Learn to understand clearly how best to manipulate the energies which you control to obtain the results most favourable to it from its relations with the part of the Universe which you do not yet control.

6. Extend the dominion of your consciousness, and its control of all forces alien to it, to the utmost.

Do this by the ever stronger and more skillful application of your faculties to the finer, clearer, fuller, and more accurate perception, the better understanding, and the more wisely ordered government, of that external Universe.

7. Never permit the thought or will of any other Being to interfere with your own.

Be constantly vigilant to resent, and on the alert to resist, with unvanquishable ardour and vehemence of passion unquenchable, every attempt of any other Being to influence you

[177] *AL* II: 70-71
[178] *AL* II: 22

otherwise than by contributing new facts to your experience of the Universe, or by assisting you to reach a higher synthesis of Truth by the mode of passionate fusion.

8. Do not repress of restrict any true instinct of your Nature; but devote all in perfection to the sole service of your one True Will.

"Be goodly therefore: dress ye all in fine apparel; eat rich foods and drink sweet wines and wines that foam! Also, take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where and with whom ye will! But always unto me."[179]

"The word of Sin is Restriction. O man! refuse not thy wife, if she will! O lover, if thou wilt, depart! There is no bond that can unite the divided but love: all else is a curse. Accurséd! Accurséd be it to the aeons! Hell."[180]

"So with thy all; thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect."[181]

"Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in splendour & pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy."[182]

9. Rejoice!

"Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains."[183]

"But ye, o my people, rise up & awake! Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy & beauty! […] A feast for fire and a feast for water; a feast for life and a greater feast for death! A feast every day in your hearts in the joy of my rapture! A feast every night unto Nu, and the

[179] *AL* I: 51
[180] *AL* I: 41
[181] *AL* I: 42-44
[182] *AL* I: 61
[183] *AL* II: 9

pleasure of uttermost delight! Aye! feast! rejoice! There is no dread hereafter. There is the dissolution, and eternal ecstasy in the kisses of Nu."[184]

"Now rejoice! now come in our splendour & rapture! Come in our passionate peace, & write sweet words for the Kings!"[185]

"Thrill with the joy of life & death! Ah! thy death shall be lovely: whoso seeth it shall be glad. Thy death shall be the seal of the promise of our agelong love. Come! lift up thine heart & rejoice!"[186]

"Is a God to live in a dog? No! but the highest are of us. They shall rejoice, our chosen: who sorroweth is not of us. Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us."[187]

B. Your Duty to Other Individual Men and Women

1. "Love is the law, love under will."[188]

Unite yourself passionately with every other form of consciousness, thus destroying the sense of separateness from the Whole, and creating a new base-line in the Universe from which to measure it.

2. "As brothers fight ye!"[189]

"If he be a King, thou canst not hurt him."[190]

To bring out saliently the differences between two points-of-view is useful to both in measuring the position of each in the whole. Combat stimulates the virile or creative energy;

[184] *AL* II: 34-35, 41-44
[185] *AL* II: 64

[186] *AL* II: 66
[187] *AL* II: 19-20
[188] *AL* I: 57
[189] *AL* III: 59
[190] *AL* II: 59

and, like love, of which it is one form, excites the mind to an orgasm which enables it to transcend its rational dullness.

3. Abstain from all interferences with other wills.

"Beware lest any force another, King against King!"[191]

(The love and war in the previous injunctions are of the nature of sport, where one respects, and learns from the opponent, but never interferes with him, outside the actual game.) To seek to dominate or influence another is to seek to deform or destroy him; and he is a necessary part of one's own Universe, that is, of one's self.

4. Seek, if you so will, to enlighten another when need arises.

This may be done, always with the strict respect for the attitude of the good sportsman, when he is in distress through failure to understand himself clearly, especially when he specifically demands help; for his darkness may hinder one's perception of his perfection. (Yet also his darkness may serve as a warning, or excite one's interest.) It is also lawful when his ignorance has lead him to interfere with one's will. All interference is in any case dangerous, and demands the exercise of extreme skill and good judgement, fortified by experience. To influence another is to leave one's citadel unguarded; and the attempt commonly ends in losing one's own self-supremacy.

5. Worship all!

"Every man and every woman is a star."[192]

"Mercy let be off: damn them who pity!"[193]

"We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery. For they feel not. Compassion is the vie of kings: stamp down the wretched & the weak: this is the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world. Think not, o king, upon that lie: That Thou

[191] *AL* II: 24

[192] *AL* I: 3

[193] *AL* III: 18

Must Die: verily thou shalt not die, but live. Now let it be understood: If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever. Nuit! Hadit! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! The Sun, Strength & Sight, Light; these are for the servants of the Star & the Snake."[194]

Each being is, exactly as you are, the sole centre of an Universe in no wise identical with, or even assimilable to, your own. The impersonal Universe of "Nature" is only an abstraction, approximately true, of the factors which it is convenient to regard as common to all. The Universe of another is therefore necessarily unknown to, and unknowable by, you; but it induces currents of energy in yours by determining in part your reactions. Use men and women, therefore, with the absolute respect due to inviolable standards of measurement; verify your own observations by comparison with similar judgements made by them; and, studying the methods which determine their failure or success, acquire for yourself the wit and skill required to cope with your own problems.

C. Your Duty to Mankind

1. Establish the Law of Thelema as the sole basis of conduct.

The general welfare of the race being necessary in many respects to your own, that well-being, like your own, principally a function of the intelligent and wise observance of the Law of Thelema, it is of the very first importance to you that every individual should frankly accept that Law, and strictly govern himself in full accordance therewith.

You may regard the establishment of the Law of Thelema as an essential element of your True Will, since, whatever the ultimate nature of that Will, the evident condition of putting it into execution is freedom from external interference.

Governments often exhibit the most deplorable stupidity, however enlightened may be the men who compose and constitute them, or the people whose destinies they direct. It is therefore incumbent on every man and woman to take the proper steps to cause the revisions of all existing statutes on the basis of the Law of Thelema. This Law being a Law of Liberty, the

[194] *AL* II: 21

aim of the legislation must be to secure the amplest freedom for each individual in the state, eschewing the presumptuous assumption that any given positive ideal is worthy to be obtained.

"The word of Sin is Restriction."[195]

The essence of crime is that it restricts the freedom of the individual outraged. (Thus, murder restricts his right to live; robbery, his right to enjoy the fruits of his labour; coining, his right to the guarantee of the State that he shall barter in security; etc.) It is then the common duty to prevent crime by segregating the criminal, and by the threat of reprisals; also, to teach the criminal that his acts, being analyzed, are contrary to his own True Will. (This may often be accomplished by taking from him the right which he has denied to others; as by outlawing the thief, so that he feels constant anxiety for the safety of his own possessions, removed from the ward of the State.) The rule is quite simple. He who violated any right declares magically that it does not exist; therefore it no longer does so, *for him*.

Crime being a direct spiritual violation of the Law of Thelema, it should not be tolerated in the community. Those who possess the instinct should be segregated in a settlement to build up a state of their own, so to learn the necessity of themselves imposing and maintaining rules of justice.

All artificial crimes should be abolished. When fantastic restrictions disappear, the greater freedom of the individual will itself teach him to avoid acts which really restrict natural rights. Thus real crime will diminish dramatically.

The administration of the Law should be simplified by training men of uprightness and discretion whose will is to fulfill this function in the community to decide all complaints by the abstract principle of the Law of Thelema, and to award judgement on the basis of the actual restriction caused by the offense.

The ultimate aim is thus to reintegrate conscience, on true scientific principles, as the warden of conduct, the monitor of the people, and the guarantee of the governors.

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[195] *AL* I: 41

D. Your Duty to All Other Beings and Things

1. Apply the Law of Thelema to all problems of fitness, use, and development.

It is a violation of the Law of Thelema to abuse the natural qualities of any animal or object by diverting it from its proper function, as determined by consideration of its history and structure. Thus, to train children to perform mental operations, or to practice tasks, for which they are unfitted, is a crime against nature. Similarly, to build houses of rotten material, to adulterate food, to destroy forests, etc., etc., is to offend.

The Law of Thelema is to be applied unflinchingly to decide every question of conduct. The inherent fitness of any thing for any proposed use should be the sole criterion.

Apparent, and sometimes even real, conflict between interests will frequently arise. Such cases are to be decided by the general value of the contending parties in the scale of Nature. Thus, a tree has a right to its life; but a man being more than a tree, he may cut it down for fuel or shelter when need arises. Even so, let him remember that the Law never fails to avenge infractions: as when wanton deforestation has ruined a climate or a soil, or as when the importation of rabbits for a cheap supply of food has created a plague.

Observe that the violation of the Law of Thelema produces cumulative ills. The drain of the agricultural population to big cities, due chiefly to persuading them to abandon their natural ideals, has not only made the country less tolerable to the peasant, but debauched the town. And the error tends to increase in geometrical proportion, until a remedy has become almost inconceivable and the whole structure of society is threatened with ruin.

The wise application based on observation and experience of the Law of Thelema is to work in conscious harmony with Evolution. Experiments in creation, involving variations from existing types, are lawful and necessary. Their value is to be judged by their fertility as bearing witness to their harmony with the course of nature towards *perfection*.

Liber Librae sub Figura XXX

Fraters Sapere Aude & ’S Rioghail Mo Dhream

Revised by TO MEΓA ΘHPION

0. Learn first—Oh thou who aspirest unto our ancient Order!—that Equilibrium is the basis of the Work. If thou thyself hast not a sure foundation, whereon wilt thou stand to direct the forces of Nature?

1. Know then, that as man is born into this world amidst the Darkness of Matter, and the strife of contending forces; so must his first endeavour be to seek the Light through their reconciliation.

2. Thou then, who hast trials and troubles, rejoice because of them, for in them is Strength, and by their means is a pathway opened unto that Light.

3. How should it be otherwise, O man, whose life is but a day in Eternity, a drop in the Ocean of time; how, were thy trials not many, couldst thou purge thy soul from the dross of earth?

Is it but now that the Higher Life is beset with dangers and difficulties; hath it not ever been so with the Sages and Hierophants of the past? They have been persecuted and reviled, they have been tormented of men; yet through this also has their Glory increased.

4. Rejoice therefore, O Initiate, for the greater thy trial the greater thy Triumph. When men shall revile thee, and speak against thee falsely, hath not the Master said, “Blessed art thou!”?

5. Yet, oh aspirant, let thy victories bring thee not Vanity, for with increase of Knowledge should come increase of Wisdom. He who knoweth little, thinketh he knoweth much; but he who knoweth much hath learned his own ignorance. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool, than of him.

6. Be not hasty to condemn others; how knowest thou that in their place, thou couldest have resisted the temptation? And even were it so, why shouldest thou despise one who is weaker than thyself?

7. Thou therefore who desirest Magical Gifts, be sure that thy soul is firm and steadfast; for it is by flattering thy weaknesses that the Weak Ones will gain power over thee. Humble thyself before thy Self, yet fear neither man nor spirit. Fear is failure, and the forerunner of failure: and courage is the beginning of virtue.

8. Therefore fear not the Spirits, but be firm and courteous with them; for thou hast no right to despise or revile them; and this too may lead thee astray. Command and banish them, curse them by the Great Names if need be; but neither mock nor revile them, for so assuredly wilt thou be led into error.

9. A man is what he maketh himself within the limits of his fixed by his inherited destiny; he is a part of mankind; his actions affect not only what he calleth himself, but also the whole universe.

10. Worship, and neglect not, the physical body which is thy temporary connection with the outer and material world. Therefore let thy mental Equilibrium be above disturbance by material events; strengthen and control the animal passions, discipline the emotions and the reason, nourish the Higher Aspirations.

11. Do good unto others for its own sake, not for reward, not for gratitude from them, not for sympathy. If thou art generous, thou wilt not long for thine ears to be tickled by expressions of gratitude.

12. Remember that unbalanced force is evil; that unbalanced severity is but cruelty and oppression; but that also unbalanced mercy is but weakness which would allow and abet Evil. Act passionately; think rationally; be Thyself.

13. True ritual is as much action as word; it is Will.

14. Remember that this earth is but an atom in the universe, and that thou thyself art but an atom thereon, and that even couldst thou become the God of this earth whereon thou crawlest and grovellest, that thou wouldest, even then, be but an atom, and one amongst many.

15. Nevertheless have the greatest self-respect, and to that end sin not against thyself. The sin which is unpardonable is knowingly and wilfully to reject truth, to fear knowledge lest that knowledge pandr not to thy prejudices.

16. To obtain Magical Power, learn to control thought; admit only those ideas that are in harmony with the end desired, and not every stray and contradictory Idea that presents itself.

17. Fixed thought is a means to an end. Therefore pay attention to the power of silent thought and meditation. The material act is but the outward expression of thy thought, and therefore hath it been said that “the thought of foolishness is sin.” Thought is the commencement of action, and if a chance thought can produce much effect, what cannot fixed thought do?

18. Therefore, as hath already been said, Establish thyself firmly in the equilibrium of forces, in the centre of the Cross of the Elements, that Cross from whose centre the Creative Word issued in the birth of the dawning Universe.

19. Be thou therefore prompt and active as the Sylphs, but avoid frivolity and caprice; be energetic and strong like the Salamanders, but avoid irritability and ferocity; be flexible and attentive to images like the Undines, but avoid idleness and changeability; be laborious and patient like the Gnomes, but avoid grossness and avarice.

20. So shalt thou gradually develop the powers of thy soul, and fit thyself to command the Spirits of the elements. For wert thou to summon the Gnomes to pander to thine avarice, thou wouldst no longer command them, but they would command thee. Wouldst thou abuse the pure beings of the woods and mountains to fill thy coffers and satisfy thy hunger of Gold? Wouldst thou debase the Spirits of Living Fire to serve thy wrath and hatred? Wouldst thou violate the purity of the Souls of the Waters to pander to thy lust of debauchery? Wouldst thou force the Spirits of the Evening Breeze to minister to thy folly and caprice? Know that with such

desires thou canst but attract the Weak, not the Strong, and in that case the Weak will have power over thee.

21. In true religion there is no sect, therefore take heed that thou blaspheme not the name by which another knoweth his God; for if thou do this thing in Jupiter thou wilt blaspheme יהוה and in Osiris יהשוה. Ask and ye shall have! Seek, and ye shall find! Knock, and it shall be opened unto you!

Semiotics and Magick

(version 3.1)

Frater Peradventura

> "Since the student is a man surrounded by material objects, if it be his wish to master one particular idea, he must make every material object about him directly suggest that idea. […] In other words, the whole magical apparatus and ritual is a complex system of mnemonics."—Aleister Crowley[196]

In this paper I will advance a theory of Magick as a semiotic structure, or system of linguistic signs or signifiers, in and through which the magical practitioner self-consciously manipulates their phenomenal experience. The choice of a semiotic methodology to develop the implications of a theory of magical practice points beyond the horizon of traditional pre-modern Platonism, which understands the intelligibility of language as derived from the participation of its *eidos* or form in a sacred, spiritual reality transcending the physical cosmos. Modern philosophical semiotics, at least since the work of Charles Sanders Pierce and Ferdinand Saussure, resists the recourse to supernatural dualism as an explanatory mechanism for the phenomenon of human linguistic discourse, focusing instead on the function of the sign as a social performative that derives its intelligibility from its contextualization within historical human social activity. By applying the methodology of modern semiotics to the practice of ceremonial Magick in the context of late capitalism, I aim to elucidate a theologically clarified and thoroughly radicalized theory of Magick.

[196] Aleister Crowley, *Magick: Book 4* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1997), 614.

I write as an emic participant in the practice of ceremonial Magick in accord with Aleister Crowley's philosophy of Thelema, while simultaneously making full use of the resources of contemporary critical theory, thereby actualizing my own valency of Crowley's distinctive method of "Skeptical Theurgy." My use of the term *emic* requires further comment, because the currently prevailing academic usage of the emic/etic distinction presupposes a whole set of Protestant norms regarding the status of religion and the faith or belief that is assumed to constitute emic participation in religion in contrast to etic disbelief and non-participation in the same. However, participation in the magical "current" of the Thelemic tradition is not reducible to these terms.

Aleister Crowley's philo-Judaic deployment of a Jewish Qabalistic enframing of his system of Magick permits him to reject the Pauline criterion of *pistis* as faithful allegiance to the status of the messiah in favor of the *gnosis*, or specially obtained knowledge, of what he calls the True Will as the goal of ritual *praxis*. Ritual practice, in a mode not unlike the Jewish concept of Torah observance, or *mitzvot*, is the locus of participation in Thelema. Furthermore, just as Jewish observance stands in an active interpretive relationship to the text of the Torah and its literature of commentaries, the practice of Thelemic ritual Magick is oriented in terms of the ongoing hermeneutical exegesis of the various historical traditions—Qabalistic, Hermetic, alchemical, etc.—that it synthesizes.

Therefore, when I assert that I am an emic participant in the Thelemic current, a "Thelemite" in other words, what I mean is that I am situated in critical engagement with a set of hermeneutical priorities that I derive from the textual literature of Thelema, as well as from the context of a long standing personal practice of ceremonial Magick, both privately and in a

group setting. Additionally, part of the procedure of that practice involves an element of methodological skepticism towards Magick, where the element of belief in its efficacy is bracketed in favor of a pragmatic openness towards the phenomenon of magical experience.

This procedure resembles Edmund Husserl's phenomenological *epoche*, in which, as he explains:

> "We put out of action the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural standpoint, we place in brackets whatever it includes respecting the nature of Being: this entire natural world therefore which is continually 'there for us,' 'present to our hand,' and will ever remain there, is a 'fact-world' of which we continue to be conscious, even though it pleases us to put it in brackets.
>
> If I do this, as I am fully free to do, I do not then deny this 'world,' as though I were a sceptic; but I use the 'phenomenological' ἐποχή, which completely bars me from using any judgement that concerns spatio-temporal existence."[197]

The phenomenological bracketing of magical skepticism includes belief in the objectively human independent reality of the angels, gods, and spirits evoked in the ritual. At the same time, should some phenomenon meeting the description of any such alleged entities disclose itself within the context of the experiential space of the ritual, it would be addressed and interacted with just as if it were real, even while the operators simultaneously maintained their skepticism towards the objective reality of the entities concerned.

Only after the ritual are the phenomenon encountered within it evaluated, and it is at this juncture that my theory of Magick differs Crowley's, whose writings leave the ontological

[197] Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1962), 99-100.

status of the magical hierarchy suspended in modernist ambiguity, like the fate of one of Henry James' heroines. On the question never conclusively answered by Crowley of whether the author of *The Book of the Law* is a disembodied "praeterhuman" intelligence or the deepest and most authentic voice of Crowley's own poetic imagination, I choose the latter interpretive option, due to my hermeneutical commitment to physicalism as an explanatory method. Furthermore, my theory of Magick is materialist in a specifically Marxist-dialectical sense of insisting on the human production of magical phenomenon and, therefore, in the ultimately anthropocentric horizon of their significance.

I therefore advocate a magical reading of Ludwig Feurbach's theology, which is that divine beings are imaginative projections of human existence, and therefore that what humans call God or gods is really themselves. Feuerbach writes:

> "The divine being is nothing else than the human being, or, rather, the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man, made objective—*i.e.*, contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being. All the attributes of the divine are, therefore, attributes of the human nature."[198]

From this perspective, I understand the Thelemic philosophy of Magick as re-interpreting the *telos* of late classical theurgy, which is to so energize the soul through the pious performance of temple rites so as to become a god, thereby bringing ancient theurgy, and with it the western ceremonial magical tradition, into alignment with the context of modern experience in the wake of the death of God. In modern existentialist language, in Thelema one

[198] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1989), 14.

becomes a divinely human self by practicing Magick, understood as the imaginative and practical process of creative self-making.

According to Aleister Crowley, "There is a single main definition of the object of all magical Ritual. It is the uniting of the Microcosm with the Macrocosm. The Supreme and Complete Ritual is therefore the Invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel; or, in the language of Mysticism, Union with God."[199]

The use of theistic language in Crowley's writings always serves as a metaphor for an ultimately atheistic spirituality. A few pages earlier Crowley writes, "By 'God' I here mean the Ideal Identity of a man's inmost nature."[200] Self-divinization through the practice of Magick is therefore the fulfillment, or at least the striving after the actualization, of the individual person's optimal potential identity. The "Holy Guardian Angel" referred to by Crowley in the passage cited above is the magical symbol that unifies and totalizes the semiotic domain of the ritual context in terms of the magician's deepest authentic potentiality for existence.

In the opening chapter of *Magick in Theory and Practice*, entitled "The Magical Theory of the Universe" Crowley gives a sketch of the Qabalistic system of number symbolism, concerning which he writes, "it cannot be too clearly understood that this is a *classification* of the Universe, that there is nothing which is not comprehended therein."[201]

As with the lists of emblematic images that form the furniture of the elaborate memory palaces of the Renaissance art of memory taught by Giordano Bruno, and his contemporaries,

[199] *Magick: Book 4*, 144.
[200] Ibid, 140.
[201] Ibid, 139.

when the mind has imprinted itself with a simulacra signifying the cosmos in its wholeness, then the mind will become whole like the wholeness that is the object of its contemplation. Frances Yates describes the magical function of the art of memory as,

> "[…] a method of printing basic or archetypal images on the memory, with the cosmic order itself as the 'place' system, a kind of inner way of knowing the universe. […] By using magical or talismanic images as memory-images, the Magus hoped to acquire universal knowledge, and also powers, obtaining through the magical organization of the imagination a magically powerful personality, tuned in, as it were, to the powers of the cosmos."[202]

Or as Crowley writes: "All these numbers are of course parts of the magician himself considered as the microcosm. The microcosm is an exact image of the Macrocosm; the Great Work is the rising of the whole man in perfect balance to the power of Infinity."[203]

From a social-material perspective, the magician functions as an ideological technician manipulating the components of ideological belief like any other ritual implement, and in accord with deeper plans and purposes than are apparent in the alienated play of immediate social appearances upon the walls of the cave of consumer consensus reality. For if, as semiotic theory insists, language serves as the primary medium for the social construction of the world of phenomenal experience, then it follows that the self-conscious re-appropriation of our linguistic enframing through dramatic ritual and creative visualization can lead to the production of a different kind of world experience than that offered by the reified forms of mass

[202] Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago, Il: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 191-2.
[203] *Magick, Book 4*, 139.

media culture. The diverse ceremonial practices of Magick thereby offer a potential site of resistance to the alienated society of globalized capitalism.

"Ideological interpellation" is a useful semiotic concept to thematize the potential of magical practice to resist social alienation due to its congruence with the magical process of invocation, the calling forth of a spirit such that phenomenal appearances are manifested. The concept of "ideological interpellation," is developed in Louis Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" published in 1970 in dialog with the events in France during the Left uprising in May of 1968, he writes:

> "All ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects […] [and] it 'recruits' subjects […] by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'
>
> Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was 'really' addressed to him."[204]

In other words, persons are made into and sustained as psychologically developed subjects through the historical process of their materially intersubjective social recognition in terms of linguistically posited roles. A subject is constructed through its inscription as a character into the text of the ongoing social narrative that surrounds and interpenetrates it. On this basis the subject is a virtual appearance, not a metaphysical substance, and its identity is therefore indefinitely malleable through the manipulation of language. For example, the state

[204] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)" in *On Ideology* (New York, NY: Verso, 2008), 47-8.

can claim or dismiss subjects as its citizens through the publication of laws to this effect, just as a warranted police officer can make one of these citizens into a criminal simply by hailing them as such on the street.

Ritual Magick hails and addresses the magician as a divine being, rather than as the hapless indentured victim of economic alienation. The function of Magick is to re-interpellate oneself through the mediation of the symbol of the Holy Guardian Angel, generating the *gnosis* of what Aleister Crowley calls the "True Will."

What is the True Will? Crowley writes: "The theory [of the True Will] is that every man and every woman has each definite attributes whose tendency, considered in due relation to environment, indicates a proper course of action in each case. To pursue this course of action is to do one's True Will."[205]

As an example of how this might work in ritual Crowley writes regarding the "Formula of the Neophyte" that underlies the ritual initiation of candidates joining a magical temple that, "the effect of this whole ceremony is to endow a thing inert and impotent with balanced motion in a given direction," such that the initiate's "aspiration" is successfully "formulated as Will."[206] Typically, Crowley defers from directly defining a causal explanation for the ritual procedure's observed effects, in accordance with his generally pragmatic approach to magical practice. The empirical datum that the performance of a certain ritual procedure is, at least sometimes, temporally succeeded by experiences significant to the participants of the earlier

[205] *Magick: Book 4*, 706.
[206] Ibid, 166.

ritual, provides, for Crowley, a sufficient basis for the elaboration of a "scientific" (in the deliberately minimal sense of being skeptical and empirical in method) theory of Magick.

Crowley's student and fellow writer on magical subjects, Israel Regardie, further develops the psychological aspect of the ceremonial efficacy of the Neophyte formula, writing:

> "From one point of view the officers employed in these Rituals represent just such psychic projections. They represent, even as figures in dream do, different aspects of man himself, personifications of abstract psychological principles inhering within the human spirit. Through the admittedly artificial or conventional means of a dramatic projection of these spiritual principles in a well-ordered ceremony a reaction is induced in consciousness. This reaction is calculated to arouse from their dormant condition those hitherto latent faculties represented objectively by the officers. Without the least conscious effort on the part of the aspirant, an involuntary current of sympathy is produced by this external delineation of spiritual parts which may be sufficient to accomplish the purpose of the ceremony. The aesthetic appeal to the imagination […] stirs to renewed activity the life of the inner domain. And the entire action of this type of dramatic initiatory ritual is that the soul may discover itself whirled in exaltation to the heights, and during that mystical elevation receive the rushing forth of the Light."[207]

Regardie's discussion of the symbolism of ritual, what he calls the "external delineation of spiritual parts," "which may be sufficient to accomplish the purpose of the ceremony," invites comparison to remarks made by the late antique philosopher Iamblichus in his *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians* concerning the efficacy of the *synthemata*, or ritual objects used in the performance of the pagan rites of the civic temples of the Roman Empire, in externally energizing the soul of the theurgist to achieve noetic unification with the divine.

Iamblichus writes:

[207] Israel Regardie, *What You Should Know About the Golden Dawn* (Phoenix, AZ: Falcon Press, 1987), 67-8.

> "For a conception of the mind does not conjoin theurgists with the Gods; since, if this were the case, what would hinder those who philosophize theoretically, from having a theurgic union with the Gods? Now, however, in reality, this is not the case. For the perfect efficacy of ineffable works, which are divinely performed in a way surpassing all intelligence, and the power of inexplicable symbols, which are known only to the Gods, impart theurgic union. Hence, we do not perform these things through intellectual perception; since, if this were the case, the intellectual energy of them would be imparted by us; neither of which is true. For when we do not energize intellectually, the *synthemata* themselves perform by themselves their proper work, and the ineffable power of the Gods itself knows, by itself, its own images. […] And thus, things pertaining to the Gods, are moved by themselves, and do not receive from any inferior nature a certain principle in themselves of their own proper energy."[208]

The phrase "those who philosophize theoretically" refers to the school of Plotinus, Iamblichus' predecessor in the historical genealogy of late classical Platonism. According to Plotinus the soul most closely approaches fusion with the divine through the practice of contemplation in the context of an ascetic lifestyle, whereby the soul withdraws itself from the material world and meditates on its own immaterial form. Iamblichus, in contrast, advocated the view that the closest participation of the soul with the divine is achieved through theurgy, which for Iamblichus primarily meant public rituals conducted at pagan temples and shrines. The *synthemata* are objects used in the rites that signify the mythological milieu of the divinities being worshipped. The thyrsus, for example, was a fennel wand associated with the Bacchic mysteries because the god was said to carry one. In Bacchic rites the worshippers would likewise bear a thyrsus. The wand served as an allegory of fertility, and the cycle of the seasons.

[208] Iamblichus, (Thomas Taylor, trans.), *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians* in *Iamblichus: On the Mysteries and Life of Pythagoras* (Frome, Somerset, UK: The Prometheus Trust), 62-3.

Likewise, the sheaf of wheat allegedly displayed during the sacrificial rites at the climax of the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries, is associated with the cult of Persephone and Demeter, and served as an allegory for the cycle of agrarian life, to which the worshipper is meaningfully brought into relationship. Iamblichus' argument is that the use of the thyrsus, sheaf of wheat, or similar objects in these rituals exposes the souls of the ritual's participants to an "image" of the divine such that their souls are energized into union with the divine.

My basic semiotic interpretation of this passage by Iamblichus is that the magical energy of the *synthemata*, its ability in Aristotelian terms to cause a transformation of the qualities of a substance, or more basically to make something happen, is possible due to the status of the *synthemata* as material signs or signifiers. It is due to the intra-social linguistic character of the semiotic tokens manipulated in theurgic ritual that the soul is energized into union with the gods, not the metaphysical participation of its signs in a supernatural and otherworldly reality, as Iamblichus holds.

I therefore claim that Iamblichus is wrong, from my own modern perspective, to deny that the efficacy of theurgy, in imparting the condition of divine union to the soul, is "imparted by us" through the "intellectual perception" of the magician. Given that reading always includes some aspect of representational thought through which the interpretation of signs occurs, the operation of the ritual *synthemata* in divinely energizing the theurgist's soul necessarily involves an element of "intellectual perception." Materially considered as semiotic signs, the operative power of the *synthemata* over the theurgist lies in their signification for the historical and culturally embedded psychology of their operators. Since the psyche is a linguistic construction,

and language is a specifically human social activity, the implication is that the magical power of images is, contrary to Iamblichus, indeed "imparted by us" during magical ritual.

The theological implication follows that human beings are the source of magical energy, not the Gods, or in Ludwig Feuerbach's terms, that the Gods are the projections and reflections of historical and material human existence. Gods, and mythology generally, are a fiction created by human beings to represent themselves in an idealized and exemplary form. However, is this not precisely the function of the godforms of the officers in the initiation ritual described in the earlier quotation from Israel Regardie, where they stand for aspects of the aspirant's psyche?

The preceding argument can be summarized in the following thesis: the function of the magical symbol in modern Magick, such as the symbol of the Holy Guardian Angel, is to imagine aspects of one's ideal form and thereby mediate oneself with one's ultimate possibilities for being.

Not all signs are symbols, however, and more needs to be said concerning the historical horizon of the concept of the magical symbol used by the kind of modern Magick practiced by Crowley and Regardie. The primary historical transition involved is that in modernity the allegory is displaceed by the symbol as the basis for narrative construction.

According to Paul de Man,

> "In the history of Western literature, the importance of the image as a dimension of poetic language does not remain constant. One could conceive of an organization of this history in terms of the relative prominence and the changing structure of metaphor. […] The most recent change remote enough to be part of history takes place toward the end of the eighteenth century and coincides with the advent of romanticism. In a statement of which equivalences can be found in all European literatures, Wordsworth reproaches Pope for having abandoned the imaginative use of figural diction in favor of a merely decorative

> allegorization. Meanwhile the term *imagination* steadily grows in importance and complexity in the critical as well as in the poetic texts of the period. This evolution in poetic terminology—of which parallel instances could easily be found in France and in Germany—corresponds to a profound change in the texture of poetic diction. The change often takes the form of a return to a greater concreteness, a proliferation of natural objects that restores to the language the material substantiality which had been partially lost. At the same time, in accordance with a dialectic that is more paradoxical than may appear at first site, the structure of the language becomes increasingly metaphorical and the image—be it under the name of symbol or even of myth—comes to be considered as the most prominent dimension of the style."[209]

In other words, the symbol replaces the allegory as the basic trope of modern Western European rhetoric. The *synthemata*, such as the Bacchic thyrsus, serve as an allegory of the theurgist's relationship to the divine milieu of the cosmic seasonal cycle, and implicitly derive their power to effect the soul from being signifiers of this organic relationship. In a similar, yet distinctly different manner, the Romantic poetry of William Blake directly identifies the human imagination with the divine, and the elaborate pantheons of divine figures that permeate his poetry are so many symbols of its creative energies in all their bodily and political expressions. Whereas the allegory stages an encounter with the sacred domain of the human independent reality of cosmic nature and the divine, the symbol derives its significance from being a self-referential creative event of human language, like the way a Wallace Stevens poem is about tie event of poetry itself, to the point where descriptive narrative of the usual trappings of poetic imagery disappears and the beauty of language appears as its own event.

[209] Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1984), 1-2.

What kind of spiritual transcendence is offered by the magical symbol, epitomized by the symbolic invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel, if by "transcendence" is not meant a metaphysical elevation of the soul above and beyond the body, nor the access of the "soul" or inner mental sense of self to any supernatural dimension?

In his essay "The Secret of the Golem,"[210] the French philosopher and literary critic Maurice Blanchot discusses the secret of the symbol, which he compares with the magical power of language to animate life—or, in other words, construct subjectivity—as narrated in the myth of the Golem, a magical automaton which is brought to life through writing. To magically animate a Golem, so the story goes, the qabalist writes the word *emet* (aleph-mem-tav), the word for "truth," in Hebrew letters on the forehead of a specially prepared clay statue of a humanoid figure. The golem is deactivated by erasing the initial aleph to spell *met* (mem-tav), meaning "dead."

According to the *Sepher Yetzirah*, or *Book of Formation*, God created the universe through the permutation of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. "These are the twenty-two letters […] and with them He created His Universe, and He formed with them all that was ever formed, and all that ever will be formed."[211] (*Sepher Yetzirah*, chapter six, verse six.) The letters of the Hebrew alphabet, alone, or permutated according to various procedures, possess the power to generate novel worlds of experience—to signify, in semiotic terms—like God is said to have done in Genesis when he created the universe by magically speaking it into being.

[210] Maurice Blanchot, "The Secret of the Golem," in *The Book to Come* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 86-92.
[211] Aryeh Kaplan (trans.), *Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1997), 254.

From the perspective of the ritual usages of modern Magick there is a degree of hermeneutical fit between Jewish Qabalah and Greco-Roman theurgy that makes both traditions viable as a source of inspiration and imitation for modern magical practitioners. Both systems of ritual practice operate through the deployment of signifiers, whose symbolic potency imparts sacredness—or significance, in secular terms—to the communal social life of their practitioners. The qabalist treats the very letters of the Hebrew alphabet as magical signs, while the theurgist deploys *synthemata* in their rites. The long, convoluted, sonorous, and howling formulae of the "barbarous names of evocation," preserved in the Greek magical papyri, are not practically dissimilar to the recitations of letter combinations used by qabalistic practitioners to induce ecstatic trances whereby revelations might be vouchsafed to the meditator by God.

In "The Secret of the Golem" Blanchot draws a distinction between two different functions of the sign/signifier in relation to the allegorical and the symbolic, or the premodern form of narrative construction in contrast to modern literary convention. He writes:

> "Allegory develops the tangled vibration of its circles very far, but without changing its level, conformable to an abundance that could be called horizontal: it keeps itself inside the limits of measured expression, representing, through something that is expressed or represented, some other thing that could also be directly expressed."[212]

For Blanchot, the transcendent dimension of the symbol, in contrast to its allegorical significance, stands in a vertical relationship to the strictly horizontal dimension of the allegory. That this arrangement makes the sign of the cross is indicative of Blanchot's French Catholic context, and of the mediaeval Christian mysticism from which he derives his elliptical style of

[212] "The Secret of the Golem," 86-7.

approaching the problematic of the symbol. Alternative spatial or temporal metaphors could be substituted, e.g. finite versus infinite expansion, or history versus eternity, or three-dimensional space versus hyperspace.

The symbol does more than facilitate the perpetuation of the social significance of the already established intra-linguistic usages of a given historical period. The symbol also points beyond itself to an ultimately human potential in excess of any given ideological order. It signifies a surplus dimension of signification, beyond the allegorical space of already understood intra-linguistic social practices. Jacques Lacan designates such a register of negative signification "the Real," insisting that the psychological domain of the absence of signification nevertheless powerfully signifies through the presence of its absence. Blanchot writes:

> "[The symbol] wants to jump outside of the sphere of language, of language in all its forms. […] Through symbol, then, there is a leap, a change of level, sudden and violent change, there is exaltation, there is falling, a passage not from one meaning to another, from a modest meaning to a vaster richness of significations, but to that which is other, to that which seems other than all possible meanings. […] Symbol does not mean anything, expresses nothing. It only makes present—by making us present to it—a reality that escapes all other capture and seems to rise up, there, prodigiously close and prodigiously far away, like a foreign presence. […] If symbol is a wall, then it is like a wall that, far from opening wide, not only becomes more opaque, but with a density, a thickness, and a reality so powerful and so exorbitant that it transforms us, changes instantly the sphere of our ways and habits, takes us away from all actual and latent knowledge, makes us more malleable, moves us, turns us around, and exposes us, by this new freedom, to the approach of another space."[213]

[213] Ibid, 87.

The interpretation of the transcendence of the symbol in terms of a religious spiritualism, of whatever stripe, theosophical or evangelical, remains at the level of the allegorical—where, for example, the signifier "God" is read as standing for an actually existing supernatural person—thereby bypassing an encounter with the properly symbolic dimension of signification entirely, where God-talk about the "divine" stands for the psychological dynamic of the presence-absence of the unconscious Real, whose pursuit drives the magician towards the realization of their deepest and most authentic human potential.

The problem of symbolic transcendence is also different from the philosophical problem of the existence of the external world, or the problem of the correspondence of words to objects, or any number of concerns regarding the functioning of intra-linguistic reference. The "Real," with a capital "R," that is the object of symbolic transcendence is therefore not correlative with the objectivity of the "real," with a lowercase "r," that refers to the physical world extending outside of private subjectivity.

The domain of the Real, with a capital "R, " the dimension of symbolic transcendence, designates the formally absent center of the psyche, its missing point of unity or totality. To say that the Real names an absence means that there is no essence, unity, or totality underlying the psyche's functioning. The psyche's experience of itself as self-consciousness is a virtual activity of self-positing. There is nothing beyond or behind the psyche's self-positing of itself that metaphysically grounds or founds its experience of itself. By acting as if we are a self, we make ourselves into one, and this process of self-making—or magical initiation—through symbolic self-interpellation is effected in, through, and by language. The transcendence of the symbol is

ultimately a self-relation, it returns the reader to themselves and their inmost potentiality for being.

What are the ontological implications of the formal limits of language, such that it manifests a dimension of symbolic transcendence? The formal limitation of any possible language is that, as a historically finite system of signs, it cannot totalize or complete its potential for signification. Dialectically, language's finitude is also its infinitude, because its ontological incompleteness is simultaneously an openness to the historical creation of new forms of expression and novel modes of interpretation. Language is always incomplete because there can always be more of it. This means that when Blanchot negatively insists that symbolic transcendence does not stand for an object of actual experience, he simultaneously positively means that it stands for the formal openness of our human frame of experience to the manifestation, in social activities such as reading and ritual, of new creative significations unanticipated by pre-existing tradition.

The material finitude of human existence is the key to unlocking the understanding of our ontological freedom. As Slavoj Žižek explains, "The frustrating nature of our human existence, the very fact that our lives are forever out of joint, marked by a traumatic imbalance, is what propels us towards permanent creativity."[214] The self-propulsion of the psyche towards its potential for creative self-realization is pre-eminantly described by the Freudian-Lacanian theory of the drive. Drive names the psyche's self-relational rotation about the absent center of the "text" of its experience, such that it "traverses the fantasy," as Lacan puts it, of its field of experience, actualizing the otherwise dormant possibilities of its existence.

[214] Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (New York, NY: Verso, 2012), 132.

This activity of restless, willful self-motivation stands in contrast to the distinctly different, although equally unconscious, instinctual and "daemonic," psychological dynamic of what Freud calls the "pleasure principle," namely the pre-conscious instinctual desire whereby "the mental apparatus endeavors to keep the quantity of excitation present in it as low as possible or at least to keep it constant."[215] The dynamic of the drive stands "beyond the pleasure principle" in that it derives masochistic pleasure from the frustration of the pleasure principle resulting from the psychic tension and dis-equilibrium produced by socialization. As a result, the psyche is driven to develop its latent capacities, and is unable to maintain itself in a state of infantile narcissism.

Some practical examples may be useful to illustrate the contrast between desire and drive. When one wakes up in the morning, one's immediate desire is to remain in bed and return to sleep. This desire is linked to the pleasure principle, and seeks the stable affective equilibrium offered by dozing off. It is the operation of the drive, however, that provides the motivation to get up anyway, despite one's desire not to, in order to actively seek out the experiences of the day, in spite the fact that one knows these experiences will not be uniformly pleasurable. Nevertheless, one gets up and engages with the non-immediate, second order enjoyment that becomes available precisely from encountering the obstacles and opportunities offered by the day's activities. Drug addiction operates according to a similar dynamic. Alcoholism, for example, involves submission to the desire for the stable, narcissistic self-absorption of continual drunkenness. However, it is the drive that constantly nags the

[215] Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in *The Freud Reader* (New York, NY: Norton, 1989), 595.

alcoholic with the possibility of sobriety, and of the access that sobriety gives to additional social possibilities not limited by the constant desire to simply stay drunk.

The opposition between desire and drive in Freud's later theory is also not a restatement of the opposition between the super-ego and the id, as articulated in Freud's earlier Oedipal theory of the psyche. The function of the super-ego as the censor of the id's libidinal desires is arbitrary, based on the psyche's internalization of historically contingent social norms which may or may not have any relation to its creative potential for self-development. For example, queer folk, depending on the extent of their socialization against the background of hetero-normative expectations regarding permissible gender roles and relations, may experience significant anxiety regarding their homo-normative sexual desires. The anxiety is a function of their super-ego. It is the drive, however, operating independently of the functioning of the censor, which can motivate queer subjects to maintain fidelity to their desire despite the super-ego's restraint. The drive must, therefore, be conceived of as standing in an excessive, surplus relation to social-ideological norms, and cannot be immediately identified with the super-ego. The drive possesses the capacity to liberate ideology from reification by enabling novel strategies of being.

The relationship of desire to the drive is therefore analogous to Blanchot's opposition of allegory to the symbol. Just as symbolic transcendence does not actually provide access to the elision of language in an elevation beyond language, a domain which is in principle inaccessible to subjectivity, so also the drive, although it expresses a psychic dynamic distinct from desire, only expresses itself phenomenally in, through, and as desire. In other words, the psyche's openness to the dimension of the drive does not indicate the psyche's departure from the

domain of desire, but rather the second order, formal organization of desire, its transmutation, evolution, and elevation in terms of the creative drive.

One of my basic theses regarding the theory of Magick is to interpret the psychoanalytic theory of the drive as the source of personal creativity as equivalent with Aleister Crowley's concept of the True Will as the source and goal of magical *gnosis*. In working out the theory of the True Will in terms of the concept of the Freudian-Lacanian drive it is useful to proceed through the negative hermeneutical procedure of first defining what the True Will is not.

If there is a True Will, then it follows that there must also be willing that is false. Specifically, the True Will is not to be identified with immediate emotional intuition. Will is not desire; it is drive, expressive of "the dynamic aspect of [the] Creative Self."[216] Will must therefore be discriminated from desire in magical practice. Crowley writes, "How then is the Will to be trained? All these wishes, whims, caprices, inclinations, tendencies, appetites, must be detected, examined, judged by the standard of whether they help or hinder the main purpose, and treated accordingly."[217]

The True Will is furthermore not reducible to the self-conscious intentionality of bourgeois individuality. It is formally impersonal, in the sense that it expresses, not the correspondence of the phenomenal self with a trans-historical platonic essence, but rather a constantly evolving ideal practical relation between each person and their world, where both the self and its world are subject to dynamic change over time. Crowley insists in his seventh theorem of Magick, as laid out in the introduction to *Magick in Theory and Practice*, that "Every

[216] *Magick: Book 4*, 525.
[217] Ibid, 62.

man and every woman has a course, depending partly on the self, and partly on the environment which is natural and necessary for each."[218] In these terms the True Will is necessarily historical and contextual, subject to change, refinement, and reformulation over time, and entirely dependent on the unique circumstances of each uniquely contextualized person. The concrete content of the True Will cannot be universalized.

Crowley writes:

> "In a galaxy each star has its own magnitude, characteristics, and direction, and the celestial harmony is best maintained by its attending to its own business. Nothing could be more subversive of that harmony than if a number of stars set up a uniform standard of conduct, insisted on every one aiming at the same goal, going at the same pace, and so on. Even a single star, by refusing to do its own Will, by restricting itself in any way, would immediately produce disorder."[219]

This passage strikingly deploys a negative dialectic of whole and part, in sharp contrast to the traditional positive organic metaphor of society as the unity of opposites, where the church and the state function to harmonize the antagonistic classes of civil society through their larger purposes and projects. In contrast, the Thelemic "harmony" of the galactic system—an analogy for human society—is facilitated by the independent diversity of its parts, not by their "unity" in relation to any state or organization. This is an anti-totalitarian and anti-statist perspective which can justly be characterized as a kind of anarchism, and which Crowley in his own lifetime explicitly contrasted with both fascism and Stalinism.

[218] Ibid, 127.
[219] Ibid, 706.

In 1938, in the dark days immediately prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, he wrote, "Democracy dodders. Ferocious Fascism, cackling Communism, equally frauds, cavort crazily all over the globe. They are hemming us in. They are abortive births of the Child, the New Aeon of Horus. Liberty stirs once more in the womb of Time."[220]

However, these remarks in no way imply that Crowley was a liberal, naively positing bourgeois social norms as the answer to totalitarianism. Crowley's writings are abundantly clear that he was a fierce critic of specifically liberal and bourgeois social values. Neither does his opposition to liberal norms make him a conservative in either his own era or in our own time, for the conservativism in question is just another restaging of the liberalism that Crowley rejects. Capitalist production is extraordinarily ineffective at providing a context for the free expression of creative individuality, as the liberal social relations of capitalist society have always already been alienated by the necessity that they be mediated by the exchange of money. The free market is, to put it bluntly, not free.

There is, however, a historical alternative to corporate bureaucracy to organize collective activity, namely the cooperative association, or voluntary society. The interpretation of Thelema I articulate in this paper actualizes this valency of anti-capitalist resistance. From this perspective, the magical working group operates as an anarchist syndicate whose agenda is the ideological liberation of its participants from consensus reality, and the maintenance of the group as a center of resistance against the larger horizon of globalized alienation in which it is embedded.

[220] A. Crowley, "Introduction," in *The Book of the Law* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1990), 14.

Spiritual transcendence, in a strictly semiotic-materialist sense, designates the dimension of the drive opened up by the semiotic manipulation of the hermeneutical horizon of human experience. The invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel produces a warping of psychic space that attracts the psyche's affective rotation of desire about the absent presence of the Real of the utopian horizon of the True Will, generating a striving after a formally unobtainable fulfilment, where the jouissance of the magician's existential striving is itself the magical attainment sought, even while the True Will is simultaneously realized as a concrete, practical engagement with specific goals and projects. Crowley likens this dynamic equilibrium to the beatific vision of divine glory, of which, "It need only be said in this place that its formula is 'Love is the law, love under will,' and that its nature is the Perpetual Sacrament of Energy in action."[221]

In conclusion, it is important to stress the ambiguities incumbent upon a personal ethics based on the psychology of the drive, given the drive's antinomian dimension. Ambiguity is inherent to an existentialist ethics that abandons recourse to the authority of the "Big Other" as the ground and source of social normativity, whether in the form of God, the state, or the "Perennial Tradition," looking instead to the consequences of human freedom within human history. A Thelemic ethics, clarified through the interpretive lens provided by semiotic method, cannot be theologically systematic in a traditional sense. It cannot simply posit a new set of universal social norms to replace the ones exploded by industrialization. It can only (at least presently) restage the problem/deadlock of modern capitalist society—that of the concrete person and their creative projects versus the alienation of the commodified society of the

[221] Aleister Crowley, *Little Essays Toward Truth* (Scottsdale, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1991), 33.

national state—while positing the True Will as the impossible-Real solution to the deadlocked horizon of history. Under the horizon of capitalist alienation, Thelema is a call to self-responsibility, through coherently purposive activity "under will," in the light of the ambiguous potential for magical transcendence through the dynamic potential of the creative drive, over and against the prevailing cultural horizon of alienated ideological mediocrity.

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Role Playing Biology: Lacan's Theory of Sexual Difference

Frater Peradventura

Jacques Lacan's innovation within the larger psychoanalytic tradition is to address the manner in which the psychological "ego," or self-conscious sense of being a distinct individual subject, is posited and constructed in terms of the larger socio-linguistic contexts which supervene upon it under the historical conditions of modern life. Lacan's work reboots Freud's oedipal theory of the psyche as a theory of linguistic socialization, thereby staging what Slavoj Žižek describes as, "the materialist problematic of the traumatic cut, 'castration,' which marks our entry into language."[222] The oedipal trauma founding subjectivity is interpreted as the rupturing of infantile narcissism occurring as the child begins to learn linguistically constructed social roles and rules. Lacan's "structuralist" theory of the subject offers a radical challenge to the Cartesian and platonic traditions' concept of an internally unified soul or self as the "essence" of the human being. The critical trajectory of Freud's thought challenges all such occult notions of the psyche.

In line with this "anti-humanist" trend within the psychoanalytic tradition, Lacan theorizes the psyche as an excess or surplus semiotic function of an animal organism which has psychologically internalized (as the imaginary) their linguistic social context (or symbolic order). The symbolic and the imaginary are dialectically reflected categories: the imaginary is the internalized symbolic function of the psyche, while the symbolic is an externalized and inter-subjective collective-imaginary that constitutes the semiotic space of social experience. Common to both registers is their linguistic construction. Language serves as the material base mediating the circular double reflection of the imaginary and the symbolic in which both functions posit each other. The imaginary is then the content, and the symbolic the form, of a process whose totality—an adequately human society—is urgently implied by, but consistently found wanting in, actual history. Subjectivity never achieves correspondence to its ideal self-symbolization. There is always an excess or surplus factor sustaining the libidinal investment

[222] Slavoj Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment: On Women and Causality* (New York, NY: Verso, 2005), 129.

of the psyche with its context, thereby maintaining the psyche's purpose by denying its total satisfaction. The Real is this implied yet absent totality which is negatively present as the gap or "cut" (of castration-socialization) holding open the dialectic between content and context, psyche and society, imaginary and symbolic. The subject's incompleteness in terms of the Real is also the formal condition of its potential freedom.

By describing the psyche as an excess or surplus existence Lacan emphasizes its status as a material phenomenon posited by the undirected process of Darwinian natural selection. Natural selection has blindly facilitated the organization of material biological systems into linguistically self-conscious form without the intervention of any preexisting archetype or plan. Human subjectivity has evolved against the background of the radical contingency of material reality. The psyche is the arbitrarily emergent ideality of matter, the living consciousness that animates, or haunts, the undead cosmos. Subjectivity is a "spiritual," virtual precipitate of material, unconscious, "dead" processes.

The psyche is therefore "unnatural" in this materialist sense: its existence in terms of the Real, as radical ontological incompleteness and contingency, fails to correspond with the order of "nature" subsequently superimposed onto it by the symbolic ideologies of human nature. Yet it is precisely the subject's radical ontological contingency that opens the space for the self-emergence of autonomy as the psyche's modern horizon. Human existence is free because it is uncreated; its self-productive historicity exceeds the limits framed by any design.

However, our freedom is simultaneously formal insofar as it is ontological; it can never be fully, concretely actualized in history. Concrete history always imposes contextual constraints upon human possibility. The contingency of history both disrupts and sustains the conditions of human freedom. However, by retracing the intricacies of the psyche's historical trajectory, psychoanalysis hopes to evoke the prophetic shade of freedom and set it once again, like Hamlet's ghost (or is it Marx's specter of communism?) to tread the boards of history. "Lacanian theory is perhaps the most radical contemporary version of the Enlightenment," Žižek insists.[223] The absence of freedom within human history is the very mark or sign of its omnipresence, of

[223] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York, NY: Verso, 1989), 7.

freedom's negative potential lurking within and sabotaging the stability of every historical status quo.

However, because the Real of the psyche is a being-in-and-for-itself in the same sense as Hegel's Spirit—it is the self-identical systemic totality of contextual substance and subjective content—the presence of the Real is elided in terms of a genetic, constitutive deadlock. The psyche is necessarily caught up within the horizon of its own system of representations once its sense of self-conscious awareness has developed. It cannot represent itself as a being-in-itself, but only as a being-for-itself, positing these two "regions of being"[224] in disjunction. The contradiction is analogous to the absence within visual experience of the network of nerves firing in the eye and brain, even though the activity of these nerves comprises the "substance," or material basis of visual experience. Indeed, even if visual experience included a representation of these nerves, this representation *qua* representation would still not "be" the activity of the observing subject's nerve cells, which cannot be represented as they are in-themselves, as substance, even while they provide the material basis for the experience that the subject is having for-itself.

Likewise, the subject's social externality cannot be represented as it is in-itself, but must pass through linguistic symbolization. For example, contrary to the popular pretentions of humanistic pop-psychology, the psyche has no emotionally immediate or intuitive access to truth or reality. For example, the somatic experience of being "in one's body" is inseparably suffused by the subject's affectivity and with it their ideology. Social contradictions cannot be objectively represented as they are in-themselves, because the representing subject has fallen into the frame of the representation. Their subjectivity is already constituted by the contents of the frame they only appear to stand outside of. Analogously, the Real resists symbolization while simultaneously organizing the psychological structure of conscious experience.

The result is that the Real of the psyche, like the incarnated God of Christianity, falls into its own creation—the structure of representations—and "dies" or is negated therein. Or, rather,

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[224] Sartre: "the preceding reflections have permitted us to distinguish two absolutely separated regions of being: the being of the *pre-reflective cogito* and the being of the phenomenon." Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 1992), 26.

the Real has always already fallen into linguistic structure, which it has primordially haunted as its undead excess. The incapacity of the Real to achieve actuality as a totality, to "unify" and resolve the gap between substance and subject, or symbolic and imaginary, means that the Real is paradoxically not real (it resists and is excluded from representation), appearing within the psyche's system of representations only as a signifier, as the linguistic sign standing in for the (absent) Real. For Lacan, the libidinal psychic economy structuring oedipal subjectivity emerges from the psyche's failed attempts to symbolize the Real.

The ideologically privileged signifier of the Real under the patriarchal symbolic order is the Phallus, the symbol of paternal authority and fulfilled enjoyment. "Libido" formally names the psyche's founding desire, which can never be fulfilled, for the retrieval or repetition of a pre-oedipal narcissism within the experience of the post-oedipal psyche. The (normatively male, heterosexual[225]) child's linguistic socialization, or oedipal "castration," provides the genetic deadlock or crisis which founds the subject by (retroactively, in the subject's subsequent fantasy[226]) "cutting" it off from access to the Phallus as the symbol of the missing Real. The immediate narcissism of pre-linguistic infancy is negated and replaced by the linguistically defined roles available within the symbolic order. As noted, Lacan posits that the unachievable utopian trace of the Real remains symbolized within the psyche as the "Phallus," as the signifier of fulfilled *jouissance* (enjoyment) allegedly possessed by the father as the (patriarchal) source of social authority. It turns out, though, that the father is impotent; no-one possess the Phallus because it is a virtual, purely symbolic object whose representation is the mark or sign of the absent Real. More will be said concerning the critical status of Lacan's concept of the Phallus below.

Primordially deprived of an adequately ontologically grounded identity in terms of the Real, the psyche instead internalizes an identity out of the linguistic symbolic order external to

[225] The normative parameters of gender roles and their symbolization are established by patriarchy, not by nature.

[226] Castration "never happened;" it is not a real event. It is a myth or legend symbolizing the primordial trauma of linguistic socialization, after which the immediacy of desire must be regulated by rules and roles.

it. During its oedipal development the psyche learns and acquires socio-linguistic roles and rules to constitute its psychological sense of self. Despite the abstract, formal freedom of the subject implicit in the psyche's abyssal ontological nothingness as a virtually existing self-relation, the psyche finds its range of possible identities always already interpellated for it by the larger system of social roles and projects.

In particular, the modern psyche discovers that it has been socially assigned—in theological language fated or predetermined—to be the subject of a capitalist society in which its identity is interpellated in terms of its class. Modern subjects must either work or own the work of others to be eligible to receive and exchange the tokens of social recognition (money). Furthermore, because these are the overdetermining historical conditions of the prevailing form of political economy, the modern subject cannot directly negate its assigned class through its immediately available range of practical action. The determinations of history intrude themselves into the psyche's abstract, negative freedom and pollute the purity of its formally infinite potential. Negatively, nevertheless, the psyche's embedded temporality, or contra-essentialist historicity, allows it a restricted range of positive creative action. The psyche's adopted social roles place it in mediation with the Real, that is to say, they partially actualize some possibilities of the subject's negative potentiality or freedom.

Along these lines Žižek insists that class struggle is the eruption of the Real into the closed circle of the conformist and consumerist liberal ideology of globalized capitalism. "The real […] is the trauma that cannot be properly articulated in the signifying chain. In Marxism, such a 'real' of the historical process is the 'class struggle' that constitutes the common thread of 'all history hithertoo': all historical formations are so many (ultimately failed) attempts to 'gentrify' [*i.e.* liberalize, make conform to bourgeois norms] this kernel of the real."[227] Experience of the class struggle corresponds to the psyche's orientation towards the Real insofar as, Žižek writes, "every position we assume towards the class struggle, including a theoretical one, is already a moment of the class struggle; it involves 'taking sides' in it, which is why there is no impartial objective standpoint enabling us to delineate class struggle."[228]

[227] Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, 199.

[228] Ibid, 155-6.

These considerations raise a question: since class struggle is an external, social phenomenon unfolding "outside" the psyche's mental representations, how can it overlap with the Real, insofar as the Real has been defined as the "internal" virtual (unrealized) totality of the psyche. How does the external social context of the psyche nevertheless determine the its internal relation to the Real? One answer to this question lies in the recognition that the horizon of the Real as the structural totality of the psyche cannot be adequately theorized in terms of Cartesian notions of mental interiority. The subject is not an internal mental event occurring in ontological separation from the physically extended reality outside of its representations. The distinction between the mental and physical aspects of reality should not be thought of in terms of separated phenomenal domains.

Rather, the two "regions of being" are robustly mediated with each other. In a dialectically reflected manner the body is the mind and the mind is the body. On one side consciousness is a product of the brain's functioning, while on the other side the form of the human body is adapted via natural selection to facilitate mentally purposive physical activity (through having limbs and sense organs, etc.). The opposed terms, mind and body, both presuppose and posit each other, having co-evolved conjoined as a physical human organism. Thinking is a physical, material activity of the body, as real as any of its biological functions. Thought does not occur in, or constitute, a second immaterial world above or behind the context of embodied history. The Real as the structural totality of the psyche, therefore, should be theorized as including its total causal context as a material, historical event, including social factors such as class struggle.

Along these lines, it should be stressed that the negative ontology of the Real is consistently framed by Lacan in naturalized, materialist terms. The Real is not a supernatural process occurring in another world, nor is it the soul. In particular, the Real is not equivalent to Jacques Derrida's crypto-ontological concept of the textual-linguistic "trace." The trace is the status of language when it is placed "under erasure."[229] This elision deconstructs realism,

[229] Derrida's phrase *sous rature* derives from Heidegger's *The Question of Being* (*Zur Seinsfrage*, 1958), which describes Being as having been "crossed out" (*Überqueren*).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Translator's Preface" in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*

because for Derrida there is no reality outside of language; he is a linguistic idealist.[230] Lacan and Žižek instead insist upon the materiality of the Real.[231] Žižek's use of Lacanian psychoanalysis seeks to constructively appropriate the legacy of traditional supernatural spirituality by re-inscribing it as a discourse concerning the Real. In other words, the (ideologically

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(Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University, 1976), xiv-xv.

[230] Derrida: "The trace must be thought before the entity. […] The field of the entity, before being determined as the field of presence, is structured according to the diverse possibilities—genetic and structural—of the trace […] and no structure of the entity escapes it." Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 47.

Therefore, regarding the status of the trace: "What has happened? In sum, nothing has been said. We have not stopped at any word; the chain rests on nothing; none of the concepts satisfies the demand, all are determined by each other and, at the same time destroy or neutralize each other." Note: "the chain [of the trace] rests on nothing," neither a material-productive "Base" (Marx), nor a transcendental-metaphysical Absolute. Realism is deconstructed and disappears. Nothing political has been said either: "[…] if Hegel's discourse, Logic […] are the slave('s) language, that is, the worker('s) language, then they can be read from left to right or from right to left, as a reactionary movement or as a revolutionary movement, or both at once. […] From right to left or left to right: these two contradictory and too-meaningful propositions equally lack pertinence."

Derrida's skeptical suspension of political commitment perfectly expresses the liberal-bourgeois quietism which permeates academic and pop-culture deconstruction. It is most certainly pertinent how the politics of the Right and the Left appear within a text. Jacques Derrida, "From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve," in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 274, 276.

[231] Lacan: "Monsieur Derrida has invented grammatology to entice people who are partial to such things, the ones who at the moment think that, just because linguistics has flung everything out, it's been a failure. We have to find applications for it."
Lacan, *My Teaching* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2008), 18.

constructed) experience of the supernatural relates the subject to the Real in a strictly material sense: supernatural objects (*e.g.*, spirits, angels and god) are unreal, they do not exist except as fantastical representations, but they serve as signs for the absence of what cannot be represented by the psyche, *i.e.* the Real of human freedom.

"Self-consciousness is desire," Hegel declares in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.[232] The libidinal economy of the psyche organizes the subject's affective relations in reference to the unrealizable desire for the Real. That is to say, the psyche desires jouissance, or the repetition of the primordial infantile narcissism allegedly preceding the linguistic-oedipal socialization of the subject. I write "allegedly" because pre-linguistic narcissism cannot be (directly, immediately) represented by a linguistically structured subject. (It can be abstractly represented, as I am doing now.) This means that primary narcissism cannot be the experience of a subject; therefore, infants have no such experience. Or, to argue the same point in parallel, since all experience is linguistically constructed, there is no such thing as pre-linguistic experience. In other words, primordial narcissism is a fantasy constructed by post oedipal subjectivity to symbolize its impossible founding moment.

However, semantically structured subjectivity lacks a founding point of origin or a metaphysical or transcendental ground. It is an abyssal, groundless, negative self-mediation whose ontological freedom is castrated by the "cut" of the Real. In other words, the virtual autonomy of human freedom is always already radically structurally mediated by its material context, and the harmonization of the psyche with its historical context has always already been deferred. Therefore, from a Lacanian perspective the proper orientation of the psyche's quest for jouissance is towards the future, towards the "not yet" of human historical potentiality. The direct return of pre-oedipal narcissism is counterproductive because it cannot be realized. There is no such experience, only its myth or fantasy. Therefore, neither mystical attainment, nor chemical intoxication can transcend the ego. The endpoint of both of these trajectories is not the recovery of the original self, but simply the cultivation of pathological narcissism. Instead,

[232] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York, NY: Oxford, 1977), 109.

jouissance should be self-consciously sublimated, and strategically deployed to empower the subject's constructively subversive activities.

Theological implications follow from Lacan's concept of the cut of the Real. For example, the protestant god who elects Christians by grace through faith, founding and grounding their subjectivity, is for Lacan a fictional representation metaphorically referring to the impossibility of the subject's relationship to the Real. Furthermore, Lacan and Žižek would add, the signifier called "god" signifies not only the un-signified Real, but also carries a surplus meaning or implied significance: that the symbolic order of society stands under the un-totalized and impotent rule of the father's authority. God stands for the father as the big Other, the source and ground of social authority who (only) appears to possesses the enjoyment denied his subordinates, who must suspend their immediate narcissism, socialize their desire, and obey the rule of the father's authority. ("Go to work, don't act out, follow your boss's orders," etc.) The traditional formula of protestant faith simultaneously sustains and conceals the patriarchal division of labor of the modern liberal society.

For Lacan the Phallus, the signifier of the father's (alleged) enjoyment, is the pre-eminent symbol for the (absent) Real within patriarchal societies—that is to say, within all past and present historical human societies. The subject is "castrated" by their genetic socialization, depriving them of the Real object of fulfilled enjoyment. The father, however, is represented as possessing the Phallus and of having its enjoyment. The satisfaction of human desire negated within the patriarchal social division of labor is fantasized as the Phallus, whose (alleged) realization of jouissance is symbolically conflated with the father's enjoyment of their authority. However, the father is also castrated, is also a socialized "speaking subject," who therefore cannot fully identify with their role as leader. The father is denied fulfillment by the sadistic pleasure their power over others grants them. As in the master-slave dialectic of the *Phenomenology*, the father-master only appears to possess autonomously realizable enjoyment; in fact their pleasure is based on a parasitic, unstable dependency on the recognition of their authority by their social subordinates. The father does not possess the Phallus; they only appear within the fantasy of ideology as if they do.

Žižek writes: "This gap between my direct psychological identity and my symbolic identity (the symbolic mask or title I wear, defining what I am for and in the big Other) is what Lacan […] calls 'symbolic castration,' with the phallus as its signifier. […] So one has to think of the phallus not as the organ that immediately expresses the vital force of my being, but as a kind of insignia, a mask that I put on in the same way that a king or judge puts on his insignia—phallus is a kind of organ without a body which I put on, which gets attached to my body, but never becomes an organic part, forever sticking out as its incoherent, excessive prosthesis. Because of this gap, the subject cannot ever fully and immediately identify with his [*sic*] symbolic mask or title."[233]

More needs to be said concerning the status of Lacan's theoretical formulation from the standpoint of feminist criticism. At first glance Lacan's concept of the Phallus appears to fall under the horizon of the feminist criticism of Freud's oedipal theory. Freud's account of castration anxiety as the basis for the normative (male, heterosexual) formation of the psyche excludes the experience of women, homosexuals and the transgendered, who are thereby deprived of the full status as subjects within pre-feminist psychoanalytic discourse. Freud theorizes women, in particular, as achieving sexualization through penis envy. They are deprived of access to the (male, heterosexual) subject's normative phallic stage of development (following the oral and anal stages) because they have no penis. This "common sense"[234] observation thereby misses the fact (conveniently, accompanied with an ideological excess of signification) that women are not thereby deprived of their own genital organs, and a corresponding stage of adult psychological development related to their distinct, female mode of sexual enjoyment. Alternative valences of genital symbolism, the vagina for example, or the diverse hybrid variations of hermaphroditic genitals, are obscured by privileging the Phallus as

[233] Slavoj Žižek, *How to Read Lacan* (New York, NY: Norton, 2006), 34.

[234] There is no such thing as common sense. All experience, feeling and thought, no matter how immediate and obvious it appears to us, is framed and infiltrated by a surplus of meaning derived from our social location and perspective. All appeals to common sense should be abolished within critical thinking.

the archetypal form of libidinal representation. Lacan's Phallus, it can be plausibly argued, stands under the shadow of this line of criticism.

Judith Butler's treatment of this issue in *Gender Trouble* will serve to summarize the critical issues pertaining to the Lacanian Phallus. For Butler, "[Lacan] poses the relation between the sexes in terms that reveal the speaking 'I' as a masculinized effect of repression, one which postures as an autonomous and self-grounding subject, but whose very coherence is called into question by the sexual positions that it excludes in the process of identity formation."[235] That is to say, "The Symbolic order [whose internalization founds subjectivity] creates cultural intelligibility through the mutually exclusive [gendered in linguistically posited opposition] positions of 'having' the Phallus (the position of men) and 'being' the Phallus (the paradoxical position of women). The interdependency of these positions recalls the Hegelian structure of failed reciprocity between master and slave, in particular, [or father and wife in the case of the division of labor within the family] the unexpected dependency of the master on the slave in order to establish his own identity through reflection."[236] However, due to this "reflected" ontologically un-grounded status of gender identity no gender role can fulfill the sexual fantasy of restoring the primordial narcissism of the Real. Therefore, for Lacan, "all gender ontology is reducible to the [unreal, fantasized] play of appearances."[237]

Biological gender essentialism is negated within Lacanian theory; our relationship to the diverse morphology of genital biology is socially constructed insofar as it is sexualized. The biological penis, for example, is simply a flabby protuberance of skin; it only takes on the role of standing for the Phallus when incorporated into the socio-linguistically constructed context of sexual activity. This is why biologically male infants have not yet symbolically conflated their penis with the Phallus. The symbolic association of the penis with the Phallus, and the "male" set of social behaviors this facilitates, is gradually acquired through linguistic socialization, especially through experience of the gender roles played out within the family.

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[235] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1990), 60.

[236] Ibid.

[237] Ibid, 63.

However, Butler argues, this is not the whole story. "There is a 'being' or ontological specification of femininity *prior to* the masquerade, [of socially constructed gender roles] a feminine desire or demand that is masked and capable of disclosure, that, indeed, might promise an eventual disruption and displacement of the phallogocentric signifying economy."[238] There positively exists "some prior ontological femininity regularly underrepresented by the phallic economy,"[239] the representation of which would displace the Phallus as the central organizing archetype of the patriarchal symbolic order and allow the authentic "identity formation" of women and the establishment of "the boundaries of a feminine gendered position."[240] On the basis of this missing option within Lacan's discourse, Butler rejects the privileging of the Phallus in her own theory of gender difference. "What plausibility can be given to an account of the Symbolic that requires a conformity to the Law [of the father, signified by the Phallus] that proves impossible to perform and that makes no room for the flexibility of the Law itself, its cultural reformulation in more plastic forms?"[241]

Butler's appeal to a primordial, immediately existing "feminine desire" that would positively ground and stabilize the "boundaries" of an experience outside patriarchy is rejected by Slavoj Žižek in his defense of Lacan. Žižek's engagement with the feminist critique of Lacan finds its' most sustained and developed expression in *The Metastases of Enjoyment* (1994), and I will focus on this text to represent his position. Žižek's counterattack hinges on Butler's objection to the plausibility of Lacan's concept of the symbolic due to its exclusion of the possibility for "cultural reformation." Žižek argues that Lacan's materialism affirms the historicity, and therefore the (potential) mutability of the patriarchal symbolic order.

Furthermore, his reading of Lacan's theory denies that Butler's liberal appeal to the authenticity of "women's experience" is sufficient to either adequately theorize or causally effect such a reformation, because the role or status of "woman" (and "man") is constituted by the social grammar of patriarchy. The negation of patriarchy would mean the negation of

[238] Ibid, 64.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Ibid, 65.

[241] Ibid, 76.

"women" (as well as "men"), not the repressed appearance of an authentic feminine experience that stood outside the patriarchal social order. It is a masculine perspective that posits the existence of authentically bounded gender experience. In fact, there is no position or possibility for immediately authentic gendered experience because all gender positions (heterosexual, homosexual, trans-gendered, etc.) are phantasmal roles interpellated by the overarching grammatical structure of the patriarchal symbolic order. Without that framework the fantasy of gender simply collapses, and with it goes the oedipal frame sustaining the subject's very sense of psychological identity.

Therefore, for Žižek, "Those who conceive of the phallic signifier […] as a privileged image or bodily part that provides the central point of reference enabling the subject to totalize the dispersed multitude of erogenous zones into a unique, hierarchically ordered totality [achieving the stable, socially adjusted self-identity posited by humanistic and Jungian psychoanalysis as the goal of therapy[242]] […] reproach Lacan with what is actually his fundamental insight: this co-ordination through the central phallic image necessarily fails."[243]

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[242] The "humanistic" constellation of psychology, encompassing such diverse figures as John Grey and Abraham Maslow, constitutes the Aryan-bourgeois, Jungian alternative to the subversive, Judaic-critical trajectory of theory represented by (Marx,) Freud, Adler, Lacan and Žižek. The hermeneutical opposition between the two traditions hinges on their normative concept of the psyche. For Jung, the liberal subject can harmoniously realize its totality as the "Self" with a capital "S," whereas Freud understands the modern subject as necessarily self-divided and incomplete due to the genetic, constitutive deadlock of the oedipal crisis.

Žižek writes, "Freud's fundamental insight [is that] sexuality does *not* follow the pleasure principle: its fundamental mode of appearance is that of a break, of the intrusion of some excessive *jouissance* that disturbs the 'normal,' balanced [bourgeois liberal] functioning of the psychic apparatus."

Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 74.

[243] Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, 128.

Furthermore, it is precisely this basic, genetic crisis or deadlock of the psyche's desire which founds the (false, misrecognized, ideological) universality of the phallic metaphor within the subject's representations. Žižek writes, "This universal surplus—this capacity of sexuality to overflow the entire field of human experience so that everything […] can acquire a sexual connotation—is not the sign of its preponderance. Rather, it is the sign of a certain structural faultiness: sexuality strives outward and overflows the adjoining domains precisely because it cannot find satisfaction in itself, because it never attains its goal."[244]

Žižek's reading of Lacan implies a startling, counter-intuitive conclusion: language is, as such, phallic. To posses subjectivity is to be assembled in reference to the phallic imaginary. How can this insight be understood anthropologically, that is to say, in materialist terms? A plausible, yet ultimately misleading, strategy is represented by Freud's *Totem and Taboo*. This would consist in reconstructing the historical circumstances that originated the rule of the phallic symbolic order within human society. Freud, for example, hypothesizes the founding of the oedipal myth by a group of prehistoric (hominid?) siblings who murder their father. To assuage their sense of guilt the family grouping established the totemic rites, thereby beginning religion.[245] Any such alleged reconstruction is really disguised mythology. Language usage is "equiprimordial"[246] (Heidegger) with the evolutionary origins of the hominid genus; its development cannot be isolated in terms of a single, identifiable event.

Instead, precisely a formal approach is called for to adequately historicize the phenomenon of language. The connection between language and patriarchy consists in the link between the correspondence socially assumed to exist between signifiers and their signified objects of reference and the role of the father/master who is invested with the social authority

[244] Ibid, 127.

[245] Freud: "An event such as the elimination of the primal father by the company of his sons must inevitably have left ineradicable traces in the history of humanity; and the less it itself was recollected, the more numerous must have been the substitutions to which it gave rise."
Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (New York, NY: Norton, 1950), 192.

[246] Translating Heidegger's *gleichursprünglich*.
Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1962), 536.

to establish the normative correspondences between signifier and signified. For example, Adam in *Genesis* acts as the archetypal father by speaking the names of all the animals as they are paraded before him, "and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name." (*Genesis* 2:19-20).[247] Male authority defines the animal's roles within the symbolic order of the agrarian mode of production. Because all historical human societies have possessed a patriarchal division of labor the *logos* or ground of intelligibility has always appeared as male within the phallic symbolic order.

A further question now arises: what is the connection between the role of the father as the *logos*, or normative subject, and the physical biology of gender? Historically there has been the appearance of such a correlation, due to the patriarchal division of labor within all previous historically existing human societies, but what is the basis for this connection in terms of the physical attributes of the bodies involved? Žižek writes, "Apropos of the two asymmetrical antinomies of symbolization [the masculine, the feminine, as well as hybrid gender roles generated within the interstices of the phallic, primary (failed) dyad of symbolization] a question imposes itself with a kind of self-evidence: what constitutes the link that connects these two purely logical [formal, abstract, phantasmal] antinomies with the opposition of female and male, which, however symbolically mediated and culturally conditioned, remains an obvious biological fact? The answer to this question is: *there is no link*. What we experience as 'sexuality' is precisely the effect of the contingent act of 'grafting' the fundamental deadlock of symbolization [definition is abyssal, language lacks any absolute ground fixing the connection between signifier and signified] on to the biological opposition of male and female. […] sexuality itself, what we experience as the highest, most intense assertion of our being, is a *bricolage*, a montage of two heterogeneous elements. Herein resides Lacan's 'deconstruction' of sexuality."[248] In support of Žižek's point, is it not the case that the phenomenon of homosexuality precisely discloses the illusory relationship between the possession of biological genitalia and gendered social roles?

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[247] *New Revised Standard Version*

[248] Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, 155.

According to Lacan's slogan, "there is no sexual relationship."[249] A critic might object at this point: "What's the use of a theory which denies the possibility of sexual relationship? Empirically, people have sexual relationships all the time." `Granted, but these relationships are based on sharing a fantasy. There is no "natural" basis for grounding the norms and boundaries of sexual relationships. They succeed or fail because at every moment of failure, of the interruption or breakdown of the mutual fantasy called love, the partners involved nevertheless "keep faith" with the shared fantasy of their desire. Lovers mediate their sexual fantasies with each other, thereby short-circuiting the social separation between them.

In this sense love has a close structural connection to Ernst Bloch's concept of the "spirit of Utopia."[250] Love and socialist revolution are both collective fantasies of solidarity whose virtual reality, like Hegel's Spirit, is sustained in and through the faith of their participants. For Lacan all sex is masturbatory and phantasmal, which means that there is no inherent norm limiting the techniques people use to cooperate when they have sex. Everything and anything goes. Lovers can negate the negation of the phallic order because the restriction of the phallic order always fails. Its negative character only means that absolute fulfillment is impossible; partial enjoyment remains a real, constant possibility. Indeed, for Lacan, the psyche is basically a phenomenon of ungrounded and unjustified jouissance, an excessive, surplus virtual reality whose illegal enjoyment constantly overloads the boundaries of any formal system of rules and roles superimposed upon it.

Judith Butler's liberal, "balanced" ideological misrecognition of this scenario instead posits an immediate, direct, authentic experience that stands outside of the phallic symbolic

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[249] Ibid.

[250] Bloch: "[Utopia] is something in a state of process, something *still pending in latent hope*, drawn on to its vanishing point in the perspective of meaning, drawn to the gravitational center of an as yet unrealized At-all, which men used to call God; but which a-theism sees as the Utopian Omega of the fulfilled Moment, the Eschaton of our immanence, the illumination of our incognito."
Ernst Bloch, "Hunger, 'Something in a Dream,' 'God of Hope,' Thing-For-Us," in *The Frankfurt School on Religion* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 50.

order of globalized modernity. There is no such position. The phallic order can only be exceeded and exploded from within the domain of its logic, in and through the surplus or excess built into the very structure of its (failed, incomplete, contradictory) totality. The phallic symbolic carries its own negation within itself; it is in-itself its own opposition. The alternatives to the phallic order are internal to that order; they do not stand outside the system but appear folded within its structure, ever more thoroughly undermining the ramparts of the patriarchal order as they historically develop and assert themselves.

However, today more than ever, liberal class-blindness and its denial of the hegemonic universality of globalized capitalism need to be explicitly called out and identified. Subjects under globalization have no access to a purely immediate psychological experience or affect outside of the capitalist division of labor and the phallic symbolic order which functions as its linguistic symptom, sublated and preserved from earlier economic epochs. The survival and reproduction of patriarchy requires today's critical thinkers to self-consciously grasp themselves as embedded agents within the cultural force field of capital, ever on their guard against the ideological fantasies of liberal consensus reality. Popular culture is a collective dream-fantasy under the spell of market alienation.

Critically insurgent theorists should therefore not join in the call for Butler's liberal "cultural reformation" of the phallic symbolic, but instead go further and demand a radical cultural revolution of the material division of economic labor such that the normative social status of the nuclear, childrearing family is altogether exploded and dissolved. (Then if some people still want to get together and raise kids, they are welcome to.) The concept of "cultural revolution" in its fully socialist sense[251] is unthinkable without an explicitly universal connection

[251] I have in mind the communal childrearing services organized for factory workers in China after the revolution. The survival of these and similar services in the wake of "reforms" within the communist party remains in serious doubt. I am also aware that any invocation of China's Cultural Revolution must include the critical acknowledgement of its dramatic political failure. However, I strongly resist western liberal attempts to ignore its historical importance. A mass movement involving hundreds of millions of human beings cannot possibly be understood through the lens of western anti-communist stereotypes.

to the larger context of class struggle. Without this larger "international" horizon of concern the limits of liberal "women's experience" are all too often defined by the smug clique-consciousness of white bourgeois suburban housewives. The same criticism applies to "homosexual experience" as well, which has kept pace with its growing cultural acceptance by becoming increasingly consumerist and bourgeois in content. Gay and women's experience will simply be conformed to bourgeois experience, and its subversive potential neutralized, until the phallic-capitalist order has been superseded by an economy where the family has been practically abolished and human identity in terms of gender is no longer historically determined by the subject's arbitrarily pre-posited location within the division of reproductive labor.

Short of this goal the grammar of patriarchy will, in the meantime, continue to reassert itself within whatever valence the cultural superstructure manifests, as long as the material social relations of economic production continue to be constituted by patriarchal norms. As long as a class owns the means of production, nominating themselves as the normative subjects of society (as the father/master in Lacanian terms), it doesn't matter if some of them are women … or even if all of them are, because in that circumstance the signifier called "woman" would simply be inverted in its semiotic location in opposition to the signifier "man," but without the social contradiction of their asymmetrical power relation being altered at all. The Phallus would now be a property owned by "woman," conferring upon them normative status as subjects, while "man" would designate a castrated subject hurled from power, like Chronos from heaven. However, this relation remains formally patriarchal (or rather "paternal") even while the biological criterion for membership in the normative class is inverted. This is why the concept of "matriarchy" proves ultimately to be a false category. Matriarchy both sublimates and perpetuates the trauma of patriarchal social relations by reifying woman's "power" into just another appearance of phallic authority.

The naïve crypto-ethnic "feminism" just described should be held in strict distinction from the theoretical *praxis* of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and its critical-historical successors (Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, etc.) where "woman" is defined as an existential project. That is to say, the concept of "woman" is left undefined and unfilled, designating a subject seeking to make themselves through their activity, yet never formally fully bounded or defined

by that activity.[252] The crucial insight of critically historicized feminism is that there is no such thing as a "woman" because there is no such thing as a "man." Gender is a social construction, never a natural or metaphysical essence.

Gender designation never adequately corresponds to biological anatomy, because formally gender is a linguistic signification which never captures all possible aspects of its designated determinate biological content. The gap between signifier and signified appears as the semantic slippage between phallic signification and factical biology. This gap does not persist because the objective empirical facts of biological gender have been misperceived, simply awaiting correct description as it were. Rather, the negative gap holding open the slippage between gender concepts and biological architecture itself constructs the space of gender difference, based on the minimal formal semantic difference between signifier and signified. Because language fails to correspond to its notions (the signifier is a graphic shape or spoken sound whose symbolization, as such, has no direct connection to the state of affairs signified) post-oedipal speaking subjects cannot psychologically fully identify themselves with their material bodily determinacy, but must use language to mediate themselves with their own physicality. To symbolically mediate this gap gender concepts have historically developed to symbolize biological difference. However, because gender categories have always already been posited by the reproductive division of labor they have never simply described biological features. Therefore, to attempt to reduce gender concepts to the logical status of biological description simply fails to understand the social significance of the concepts allegedly being defined. Gender only comes to signify biological difference after gender roles have been overdetermined by the hegemony of the patriarchal family and its division of labor.

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[252] de Beauvoir: "The theory of historical materialism has brought to light some most important truths. Humanity is not an animal species, it is a historical reality. Human society is an *antiphysis*—in a sense it is against nature; it does not passively submit to the presence of nature but rather takes over the control of nature on its own behalf. This arrogation is not an inward, subjective operation; it is accomplished objectively in practical action." It should be noted that de Beauvoir includes biological gender within her concept of "nature."
Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1952), 58.

In summary, Monique Wittig states the "politically correct" (I use the term without irony or apology) formulation of what I mean when she writes: "In speaking of their genitals the women do not employ hyperboles metaphors, they do not proceed sequentially or by gradation. They do not recite long litanies, whose refrain is an unending imprecation. They do not strive to multiply the intervals so that in sum they signify a deliberate lapse. They say that all these forms denote an outworn language. They say everything must begin over again. They say that a great wind is sweeping the earth. They say that the sun is about to rise."[253] Let this proclamation stand against Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* and similar shallow liberal attempts to romanticize and commodify women's experience, while failing to adequately identify and challenge the economic status and limits of gender experience as such.

Therefore, in terms of the phallic symbolic—whose historical (and therefore contingent) universality must first be acknowledged before it can be elided—the vagina is posited neither as the opposite of the Phallus, nor as its alternative negative "polarity." For Lacan, the vagina stands for the Phallus just as much as the penis does. Because the Phallus represents the lack of the object of fulfillment, the negative concavity of the vaginal void outlines, as it were, the absent Phallus, thereby facilitating its symbolic phantasmal presence within the vagina as it is "filled" by erotic enjoyment. "Women," therefore, are castrated just like "men"—they have no penis—but they symbolically overcome this by hiding the Phallus within and as their vaginas. Therefore "women" represent the possibility for direct sexual fulfillment within the phallic social order. Women paradoxically "have" the Phallus for Lacan, by having a vagina.

Biological males, who are castrated in an immediate sense (covering their penises in public as a sign of socialization, but lacking a vagina as a symbolic substitute or sign of the Phallus) "are" the Phallus in the negative sense of needing to recover their lost, castrated, socially restricted enjoyment by finding the Phallus hidden in and as the woman's vagina and reattaching it. Sheathing their penis within the phallic enclosure of the vagina, heterosexual men fantasize the presence of the Phallus, which appears precisely as the physical penis vanishes within the phallic "glove puppet" of the vagina, activating the penis' phantasmal ability to play the role of the Phallus. Meanwhile, the heterosexual woman fantasizes that the penis'

[253] Monique Wittig, *Les Guérillères* (New York, NY: Avon, 1971), 66.

penetration fills the vagina's phallic void, symbolizing the presence of the Phallus and generating enjoyment. As soon as the basically phantasmal quality of sex is recognized, homosexual and auto-erotic symbolizations of the Phallus are easily proliferated. The anus becomes symbolically phallicized for gay men like the vagina, or is it that the vagina is phallicized like the anus? (Take your pick, the symbolization runs in either direction.) For Lacan, there is no "normal" sex. Sexual enjoyment always involves the excessive subversion of the phallic symbolic order, because the Phallus as such is a castrated, missing, fantasized object lacking any direct correspondence to biological genitalia. With sex, anything goes: "there is no sexual relationship."

Even sexual situations which "common sense" would consider lacking in phallic reference—lesbian sex, for example—can turn out to be saturated with phallic symbolization. To refer to my personal experience for a moment, I was once invited to watch two female friends have sexual intercourse. This involved one of them taking on the "male" role of strapping on a dildo and penetrating the other while in the "missionary position." The technique used and the roles adopted were not significantly different from those used in heterosexual sex. Furthermore, the presence of my own male gaze may have served a role in activating and validating the phallic function of the dildo. There was no penis involved, but the Phallus is not the penis, and in this case the Phallus was very much invoked.

Indeed, even in biological terms (which must be socially interpreted to "stand for" gender attributes) the vagina and the penis should not be too rigidly distinguished from each other. Genital diversity results from the developmental variations of an originally undifferentiated fetal membranous tissue. Like the bellybutton, genitalia can develop into either an "outee" or an "inee." The vagina and the penis are non-conscious organs of cellular tissue; they only perform the role of the phallic object of enjoyment when they mediate the externalization of the subject's sexual fantasy through being incorporated into that fantasy. The vagina and the penis become phallicized by being fantasized. As the immediacy of the body is elided enjoyment occurs both despite and because of the failure of the phallic evocation. As for the much mystified moment of orgasm, is it not the case that orgasm represents the failure of

sex, the breakdown and discontinuation of enjoyment, as much or even more than its sublime "climax"?

Nevertheless, despite my support for his position, Žižek's texts as they presently stand do a fairly poor job of representing and engaging with the experience of homosexuals, in particular, and of "women" by implication, insofar as feminine experience is pigeonholed within an overly reified heterosexual framework. A striking example from his relatively recent 2006 work *How to Read Lacan* will serve to illustrate this issue within Žižek's work. He writes, apropos the cross-dressing character of Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, "For Lacan, this is […] the function of the feminine masquerade: she wears a mask to make us respond […]—*OK, take off the mask and show us who you really are!* Likewise, we can imagine Orlando, after the mock wedding ceremony, turning to Rosalind-Ganymede and telling her: 'You played Rosalind so well that you almost made me believe you were her; now you can return to what you are and be Ganymede again.' It is no accident that the agents of such double masquerades are always women: a man can only pretend to be a woman; only a woman can pretend to be a man who is pretending to be a woman, because only a woman can *pretend to be what she is*—to be a woman."[254]

If a masquerade plays a joke—the comedy of elided identity—then the joke here is on Žižek. Why? In an Elizabethan context, unlike in modern theatres, Rosalind was played by a man. Žižek is therefore precisely wrong that only "women" can perform complex hybrid gender role-playing, because Rosalind is precisely a triple masquerade: "she" is a man who teases the audience with comedic homosexual innuendo under the guise of playing a woman, who plays a man, playing a woman. Žižek's surprising misrecognition of this feature of *As You Like It* is overloaded with surplus significance and, consistent with his own psychoanalytic methodology, should be read as a symptom of phallic-patriarchal ideology within his own writings. Žižek has re-reified at a meta-critical level certain features of patriarchal discourse: specifically the failure to frame and adequately represent the appearance of liminal, disruptive homosexual valences within the phallic social order. He affirms these valences in theory, but his treatment of them is usually perfunctory. This limitation is especially evident in *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, where

[254] Žižek, *How to Read Lacan*, 115.

a meta-critical reification of dualistic gender boundaries excludes an adequate treatment of homosexuality as such anywhere within the book, a problematic omission for a work concerned with the social construction of gender.

In summation, Žižek's reading of Lacan's theory of sexual difference establishes that patriarchy, like capitalism, functions as a "false universal" alienating human beings from the fulfillment of their historical potential. The phallic symbolic is a social reification of the patriarchal division of labor which, either in the family, or at work in the figure of the "boss," restricts the realization of desire. Patriarchal ideology is concretized in the symbol of the father, which is equivalent to the semiotic function of the signifier "God" in theistic religion, whose *logos*/Phallus sustains the harmonious cosmic order.

Ultimately, the sublation of ideology into more liberating modalities is really a practical matter. Patriarchy can only be overcome politically, through the permutation and proliferation of alternative gender narratives that overload the binary grammar of the traditional division of reproductive labor. When people do things in new ways, those new ways become normal. The compulsion to support patriarchal relations is pathological; the complex dissolves when people choose to act differently.

The Practice of the Magical Diary

Frater Peradventura

Keeping a diary of one's spiritual exercises, experiences, and reflections is one of the most important and effective activities the aspiring magician can dedicate themselves to mastering. Why is this?

Crowley was fond of describing his approach to magical training with the motto "*the method of science, the aim of religion.*" This motto was used in every issue of his massive publication *The Equinox*.[255] This idea of a scientific approach to mysticism and Magick is a key component of the Thelemic tradition and is at the basis of the usefulness of the diary as well.

What is "science"? If we attempt to answer that question, we will discover that the word designates more of a variety of background assumptions, activities, and attitudes, rather than something really specifiable by a set of propositions that everyone would agree with. In the 18th and 19th centuries, "science" was often used to connotate any kind of knowledge arrived at through reason. Hegel uses the term in this manner, for example. Today, science is perhaps best understood as a set of methods for recognizing repeatable regularities. The goal of using these methods is not itself determined by the methods. This way of understanding the idea of science also has the attitude that beliefs, assertions, or theories should be subjected to some kind of appropriate testing or verification.

Crowley's Magick legitimately has some features of this type of science, and in few places more clearly then in his use of the diary record. The diary functions explicitly as a kind of lab notebook for various investigations that the magician undertakes. What is the nature of these investigations?

The oath of the probationer of A.˙.A.˙. is to explore the nature of one's being. One's own being, one's self, is therefore the phenomenon to be subjected to experimentation. The aim of the experimentation is "religion" and so this determines the type of experiments with which the phenomenon is interrogated. Our questions are therefore ultimately hermeneutical. When we ask what this self is, and what its nature and limits are, we are inquiring after its *meaning*.

[255] Crowley, Aleister, *The Equinox Volume I*, Samuel Weiser, York Beach, Maine, 1992.

It may turn out, in exploring this phenomenon, that the self is not at all like a physical object, and that it is opaque to analysis in quite the same quantitative manner as are the chemical properties of H_2O, for example. Nevertheless, the method will remain scientific in the broad sense described above if one proceeds with attention paid to the observation of repeatable regularities, and if one refuses to be convinced of states of affairs by other than conclusive results. Skepticism is an important element, but, as in physical science, as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. The end is the attempted discovery of the meaning of one's existence. Most crucial to all of this is that a record of the procedure be made for oneself and others. This is the magical diary.

As for the actual practice of the magical record, here are a few personal reflections from my own work along these lines over the years:

First of all, don't worry too much about presentability in terms of what one writes on. Fancy manuscript books give a weight to the value of one's diary work—but loose binder paper sheets work just as well. They transport easily and can be copied without difficulty. The value of the diary is what is written in it, not what it's written on. Nevertheless, a quality bound book has a real magical effect that should not be overlooked. This is a matter of preference, but don't be afraid to use a format that gets you to write but doesn't look pretty.

Try to write something every day, even if it's that you “did nothing,” because if you get that down you haven't done nothing, you've at least worked on your diary. Crowley would not advance anyone past Probationer in the A.˙.A.˙. unless they could keep a complete diary for a year. He didn't care if what was attempted in it was completely successful, but they had to do something, and there had to be a record of it. Try holding yourself to the same standard and see what happens. I guarantee that whatever practices you are doing or experiences you are having, they will be enriched by writing them down. The self-reflection necessitated by the nature of the activity will act to deepen your spirituality.

Don't try to make too much of a distinction between your spiritual activities and your daily life. Let the record deal with your mundane goings on—let it be a regular diary at times—but keep in mind as you do so the ultimately religious nature of the record. Let that aspect of the diary bleed into and infiltrate your supposedly profane goings about. See how

they tie into and are inseparable from your explicitly magical practice. Let yourself discover, through your diary work, exactly how it is that your whole life really is dedicated to the Great Work.

Finally, don't worry about how good a writer you are. The important thing is to write. If you're a poor prose stylist, keeping a regular diary will make you a better one.

There are many more kinds of work one can do with the record above and beyond the basic use that has already been discussed. Two particular exercises I have found to be of particular value. These come originally from Phyllis Seckler.[256]

The first involves keeping a record every day for 3 months of issues related to your health. What are you doing to keep yourself healthy? Do you feel ill often or have chronic problems? What are you eating? Do you smoke and if so how much? Try each day to do something in a positive direction toward maintaining or enhancing your health. Make a note of it in the diary.

Many kinds of spirituality suffer from a kind of dualism, a belief that the physical body is somehow unimportant or inessential. This is a limited point of view. Thomas Aquinas says that the human existence is a unity of body, soul and spirit. These are distinguishable in some contexts, and yet if they are separated the human being ceases to be as such. In alchemy, the analogue is the presence of the three alchemical principles in all things. Salt is body, sulfur is soul, and mercury is spirit. This sacred triad further corresponds to the three mother letters and ultimately to the Supernal trinity - which is thereby manifest in all substance. You can't abuse a third of yourself and hope to succeed in your goals of a superior life. This health practice is designed to remedy that tendency to imbalance, and to keep one in a balanced and grounded state.

The second practice is to make notes, every day for three months, on one's process of psychological projection. That is to say, on one's tendency to interpret others, or to expect them to behave in a manner that has not to do with the way they actually are, but with the processes and prejudices of one's own psyche. This kind of thing goes on all the time to color our perceptions. It is not something which we can ever somehow stop, because all of our judgments

[256] These exercises are assigned as part of the course work of the College of Thelema.

and perceptions will necessarily be from some perspective. The task of this exercise is rather to become mindful and aware of our own process, so that we can learn to project in appropriate, rather than in inappropriate ways. This kind of mindfulness is most necessary when one is working with a spiritual group, where projection issues are in continual danger of distracting from a frank commitment to the work that occurs there.

These two diary practices are intended to develop habits that should persist throughout one's life. They are mindfulness exercises, and while they have initial time limits, they can be returned to formally or informally in one's future journal work. They're tools, so to speak, which one may keep in one's kit to use when necessary.

We can learn a bit more about the diary from reading what Crowley has to say about it in his magnum opus *Book 4*. In part two of this work he devotes a chapter called 'The Book' to this subject.[257] He begins by writing:

"The Book of Spells or of Conjurations is the Record of every thought, word, and deed of the Magician; for everything that he has willed is willed to a purpose. It is the same as if he had taken an oath to perform some achievement."

In speaking of "the Book," Crowley is here speaking of far more than the physical diary. That is here revealed to be a symbol of the very life as a whole of the magician. This Book is said to be a book of Spells and Conjurations, for one's life is itself a spell, the greatest spell that one will ever cast. It is the creation and conjuration of a reality, of a life. Everything in this life is said to be willed to a purpose. That is, every occurrence in one's life is an expression, in one phase or another, of the True Will. As the diary comes to demonstrate this, it will come more and more to correspond to the sacred Book described by Crowley. The goal of the diary, therefore, is to make a record of this life, such that through its analysis the True Will can be shown. This is the ultimate purpose of the record.

"Now this Book must be a holy Book, not a scribbling book in which you jot down every piece of rubbish that comes into your head. It is written, Liber VII, V 22-29: 'Every breath, every word, every thought, every deed is an act of love with Thee. Be this devotion a potent spell to exorcise the demons of the Five."

[257] Crowley, Aleister, *Magick: Book 4*, pg. 107-108.

As one's career in Magick and larger life come to express the True Will they cease to be a meaningless, random sequence of occurrences. Nihilism is not the final philosophical position of the Thelemite. The discovery of one's alternative personal significance and purpose is the Great Work. How is this accomplished, and what part does the magical record have to play in this? The quoted passage from the Holy Books might give us a clue. It reads in full:

"23. Every breath, every word, every thought, every deed is an act of love with Thee.

24. The songs of me are the soft sighs:

25. The thoughts of me are very rapture:

26. And my deeds are the myriads of Thy children, the stars and the atoms.

27. Let there be nothing!

28. Let all things drop into this ocean of Love!

29. Be this devotion a potent spell to exorcise the demons of the Five!"[258]

The demons of the five are obscurations and distractions of Will, Thought, Emotion, Body, and Spirit away from the True Will—qlipoth of the elemental realm. They are overcome through dedication of these components of the self to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. Then the deeds of one's will become the myriads of children of the living God—the stars and the atoms of the cosmic body of Nuit. One's thoughts become "very rapture". The songs of one's emotions become the "soft sighs". The life of one's body, the beat of one's heart, becomes the pendulum of love to the Angel. Finally, one's spirit becomes one pointed to the experience of what *Liber 7* calls in mystical language "the Nothing". All things, all experiences are then immersed into "this ocean of love" of gnosis of the Angel. This gnosis is the goal of all magical and mystical practice of the Thelemic initiate.

The task of the diary is to build mindfulness of this goal. The awareness of the Angel is built in stages. One of the most difficult things for the beginning or even advanced magician to overcome is a kind of forgetfulness of past moments of breakthrough experience. This becomes particularly acute during periods of ordeal. The record can be a weapon in this struggle. The passions and distractions of the moment may seem to overwhelm the larger trajectory of the True Will. The diary can bring us back to an awareness of that trajectory, back to what is

[258] Crowley, Aleister, *The Holy Books of Thelema*, pg. 27.

essential. *"All the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains."* (*AL* II: 9) This remembrance acts to bind and exorcise the demons of distraction.

"The Book must then be thus written. In the first place the Magician must perform the practice laid down in Liber 913 so that he understands perfectly who he is, and to what his development must necessarily tend. So much for the first page of the Book."

This is a recommendation to undertake the practices laid out in the A.˙.A.˙. instructional paper *Liber Thisharb*.[259] These exercises are assigned to the Exempt Adept insofar as their successful completion results in the Gnosis of the True Will, and therefore passage through the Abyss to Understanding. Even though this Liber's tasks are specifically assigned to the Exempt Adept, anyone can undertake them in a preliminary manner. Some of these practices are very advanced in nature, but the general exercise is a very basic one. One must ask of oneself the three questions posed at the first pylon of initiation in *Liber Pyramidos*:[260]

Who am I?

Where did I come from?

Where am I going?

In other words, ask seriously the big question—what is the meaning of my life? As we say in Thelema—what is my True Will?

The diary is one of the best ways to begin to approach this question, as it involves a study of oneself. Through this conscious study, carried out in the record, one can begin to grasp the parameters of the issues involved.

Completion of the task of *Liber Thisharb* is said by Crowley to constitute only the "first page" of the Book. After discovering one's True Will, one must then live it.

"Let him then be careful to write nothing therein that is inharmonious or untrue. Nor can he avoid this writing, for this is a Magick Book. If you abandon even for an hour the one purpose of your life, you will find a number of meaningless scratches and scrawls on the white vellum; and these cannot be erased. In such a case, when you come to conjure a demon by the power of the Book, he will mock you; he will point to all this foolish writing, more like his own then yours. In

[259] Crowley, Aleister, *Magick: Book 4*, pg. 647-652.

[260] Crowley, Aleister et. al., *Commentaries on the Holy Books: The Equinox Vol. IV #1* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1996), pg. 59-72.

vain will you continue with the subsequent spells; you have broken by your own foolishness the chain which would have bound him."

Evocation, or more properly Goetia, serves as a metaphor for the confrontation in our lives of perceived obstacles to our True Wills. These must be summoned, faced, and bound by the power of the Angel, by the power of the True Will. When we distract ourselves from our real purpose we are helpless before these forces of dispersion. We cannot control them and so they master and use us, rather than the proper relationship—where we should master and use them in accordance with our True Will.

The situation described in this passage is metaphor—and yet in some situations it can be literal. In *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* the first task of one who has accomplished the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is to summon the 4 great devils of the world and all of their legion of servitors.[261] These are evoked and bound by the traditional magical methods. The Adeptus Major in A.˙.A.˙. is expected to perform or have performed some kind of analogous task. Some interpret it as assigned to the path of Lamed, corresponding to Libra the balances. This path involves the equilibration of one's past karma.

With regard to the practice of the diary, this passage involves an exhortation by Crowley to discipline and dedication in the execution of its writing. The more seriously one takes the exercise of the magical record, the more seriously it will be of value to one.

"Even the calligraphy of the Book must be firm, clear and beautiful; in the cloud of incense it is hard to read the conjurations. While you peer dimly through the smoke, the demon will vanish, and you will have to write the terrible word 'failure'.

And yet there is no page of this Book on which this word is not written; but so long as it is immediately followed by a new affirmation, all is not lost; and as in this Book the word 'failure' is thus made of little account, so also must the word 'success' never be employed, for it is the last word that may be written therein, and it is followed by a full stop.

[261] Mathers, S.L. MacGregor (ed.), *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (New York, NY: Dover 1975).

This full stop may never be written anywhere else; for the writing of the Book goes on eternally; there is no way of closing the record until the goal of all has been attained. Let every page of this Book be filled with song—for it is a Book of incantation!"

These passages involve some rather deep reflections. Crowley seems to imply here the mystery and paradox that one can never completely realize one's True Will, that one can never achieve a completely perfect state, because imperfection and failure to achieve the True Will somehow is itself part of the True Will. Suffering and ordeal is part of the game of life, of a constant veiling and unveiling of the True Will by the True Will. To remove this completely and forever is to create a perfect stasis of that Will. This is a negation of the value of life. Being in a coma is not a state of perfect mastery.

So, we can never stop this practice of the magical diary. We can never put down our pen and say—I've become enlightened, I don't need to practice anymore. That's death. Better to shun it for life.

"The pages of this Book are of virgin vellum, made from the calf which was borne by Isis-Hathor the Great Mother, to Osiris-Apis the Redeemer. It is bound in blue leather on which the word Thelema is written in gold. Let the pen with which the writing is done be the feather of a young male swan - the swan whose name is AUM. And let the ink be made of the gall of a fish, the fish Oannes.

Thus far concerning the Book."

The life of the initiate is the product or issue of the dualities of existence, here represented by Isis and Osiris. Their child is Horus, the chief deity of the Thelemic pantheon, eidolon of the True Will. The book is blue to signify Chesed, which corresponds to the faculty of memory in the Qabalistic system. The name of the book is written in gold to signify Tiphareth and the True Will, and its title is 'Thelema' to signify the same. All of the other materials associated with the book are likewise divine. So is the life of the initiate. Let him try to understand this through its use.